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# ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES

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<b>SECTION:</b> 200 – General Administration	<b>POLICY#:</b> 201
<b>TITLE:</b> Inclement Weather	<b>R &amp; O #:</b> 98 - 221
	<b>IMPLEMENTED BY PROCEDURE #:</b> 201-A
<b>SPONSORING DEPT/DIV:</b> County Administrative Office	
<b>ADOPTED:</b> 12/08/1998	<b>REVIEWED:</b> 10/26/2017

## **PURPOSE:**

Washington County is committed to providing quality and cost-effective public services, including many mandatory and emergency-related functions, in all types of weather and conditions. The purpose of this policy and these procedures is to inform employees of their work-related responsibilities and options during inclement weather events.

## **DEFINITIONS:**

### *Closure Types*

*Facility Closure* – refers to the official closing of a County facility by the County Administrator or designee if the facility is no longer physically accessible, it cannot support operations (due to lack of power, heating and so forth) or other similar circumstances exist.

*Public Closure* – refers to the official closure of a County facility to public access by the County Administrator or designee, but the facility remains open and accessible for reporting County staff.

*Curtailement* – refers to the reduction, limitation, or suspension of normal operations within a County facility when the facility is otherwise open (i.e., not closed). This may involve canceling or rescheduling meetings and/or public appointments or adjusting normal operating hours and staffing levels.

*Inclement Weather Events* – refers to weather-related incidents such as wind, snow, and ice storms, heavy rain, flooding, and other incidents that impede an employee’s ability to travel to/from the workplace as well as the public’s ability to access County services.

*Normal Operations* – refers to the routine services, service levels, activities and functions of any given office, department or division.

**GENERAL POLICY:**

Washington County provides a wide array of services many of which must be staffed during inclement weather and other emergent events. These services include, but are not limited to, law enforcement, road operations, emergency management (including staffing of the Emergency Operations Center and/or Department Operation Center(s)), support services emergency-related functions and the operation of 24-hour facilities (such as the jail, corrections center, animal shelter and juvenile shelter).

In deference to these diverse and essential service requirements, and the significant number of employees performing these functions, it is the County’s general policy to keep facilities open and accessible to the public during inclement weather events. Although a County facility is open, services and staffing levels operating out of the facility may be temporarily curtailed.

**POLICY GUIDELINES:**

1. Responsibilities:

The Board of Commissioners has formally delegated authority to the County Administrator to promulgate and enforce a policy governing reporting for work, adjusting schedules and compensation, closing workplaces and such other matters as may be necessary in the event of inclement weather, power outages or similar events which may interfere with the normal operations of the County (RO 98-221). As a practical matter, exercising the authority described in this policy will require the County Administrator to coordinate with department directors and managers in the decision-making process.

2. General Provisions:

In the event of inclement weather, all scheduled employees will make a good-faith effort to report to work. This includes, but is not limited to, allowing sufficient travel time and using alternate routes or alternate methods of transportation.

The County intends to keep County facilities open and accessible to the public under most inclement weather scenarios. The County may respond to any inclement weather scenario in one of three ways depending on the situation:

1. Normal Operations – Facility is open and accessible to the public.
2. Curtailment – Facility is open and accessible to the public, but departments are actively assessing the situation and making decisions to limit hours of operation, modify staffing levels, and reschedule public appointments.
3. Closure – Facility is closed to the public and/or staff:
  - a. Public Closure – Facility is open, but closed to the public.

b. Facility Closure – Facility is closed to the public and staff.

3. Normal Operations, Curtailment or Public Closure Scenarios:

Department directors and managers may deviate from normal operations (curtailment) during an inclement weather event in coordination with the County Administrative Office. The County Administrator may also close a facility to the public (public closure) or close a facility to both the public and staff (facility closure). During a curtailment or public closure, the facility in which the program operates would remain open and employees would be expected to report to work unless other arrangements are made with their supervisor. An employee who is unable to report to work is subject to the provisions of Sections 3.1 - 3.5 below.

3.1 Timekeeping

When a County facility is open and services are in the status of normal operations, curtailment, or public closure, and a scheduled employee is unable to report to work because of inclement weather and has not made other work arrangements with their supervisor, the employee shall either use earned paid leave (such as compensatory time, vacation leave, administrative leave or floating holiday) or request leave without pay. In no situation shall sick leave be used because of inclement weather.

3.2 Inability to Report to Work

A scheduled employee who is unable to report to work due to inclement weather shall notify their immediate supervisor or manager as soon as practicable.

3.3 Request for Adjusted Work Schedule

An employee may request to report to work at a later time and/or leave early due to inclement conditions. Such request shall be made as soon as practicable to the immediate supervisor or manager. Work time missed will be charged to the employee's earned paid leave or leave without pay as appropriate. Employees who are exempt from the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) shall not be required to use leave in this situation if they perform at least four (4) hours of work on the day in question consistent with the requirements of the Management, Administrative and Professional Personnel (MAPPS) policy.

3.4 Request to Make Up Work

An employee may request to make up work missed due to inclement weather during the same workweek. Approval is at the sole discretion of the immediate supervisor or manager. Hours not made up will be charged to the employee's earned paid leave or leave without pay as appropriate.

### 3.5 Request to Work at Home

An employee may request to work at home during an inclement weather event. The employee's immediate supervisor or manager will consider the nature of the employee's job, the operating needs of the work unit and other relevant issues in deciding whether to grant such a request. An employee authorized to work at home is expected to follow through and complete a regular workday from home regardless of any subsequent curtailment or closure decisions made by the County.

## 4. Facility Closure:

If a facility is not physically accessible, it cannot support operations (due to lack of power, heating and so forth) or other similar circumstances exist, the County Administrator, or designee, has the authority to close the facility and inform employees, the media and members of the public.

### 4.1 Facility Closure during a Workday

Should it become necessary for the County Administrator to close a facility during the work day, the employee's supervisor shall attempt to reassign the employee to other work within the department or office at another facility. If no suitable assignment is available, the County Administrator, or designee, may make a short-term assignment to another location or department, or may dismiss the employee with pay for the remainder of the employee's shift. If this decision occurs while an employee is in transit to work as verified by the employee's supervisor, the employee shall be paid for that full workday or shift. If this decision occurs after an employee has left work, or if an employee did not report to work, the employee shall remain in the paid-leave or leave-without-pay status they were in prior to the closure and for the duration of their workday.

### 4.2 Closure Prior to Workday

In some situations, it may be necessary for the County Administrator, or designee, to close a County facility prior to the beginning of the scheduled workday. In such circumstances, efforts will be made to notify employees of the closure prior to the start of their work shift. Notice of closure may include announcements on the radio, television, County website, County email and through other methods. It is the employee's responsibility to verify if a facility has been closed.

If a facility is closed prior to the beginning of the workday, the employee's supervisor shall attempt to reassign the employee to other work within the department or office at another facility. If no suitable assignment is available, the County Administrator, or designee, may make a short-term assignment to another location or department, or the employee may work from home. The work from home assignments may be position specific (if appropriate work is available) or broadened to include department or countywide training and/or wellness and emergency preparedness activities that can be performed from a remote location.

5. Implementation:

Elected officials and department directors are expected to be knowledgeable of, and shall be responsible for, implementing this policy within their respective departments and offices.

Observance of this policy is mandatory for all County employees and violation may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

6. Periodic Review:

This policy shall be reviewed by the County Administrative Office at least every three years, or more often if needed, and updated as necessary.