

## **Emergency Closure Frequently Asked Questions**

### **I. DECISION TO TEMPORARILY CLOSE AGENCY OPERATIONS**

**1. Q. What considerations should an agency keep in mind during an office or location closure?**

A. Consider the following when communicating about an agency closure to employees:

- Whether the closure is applicable to the entire agency or only to a particular office or location(s) affected by inclement weather.
- Notification to essential employees (see Q2 below) that they will be required to come into work (and where to report) during the emergency closure.
- Identify channels for effectively communicating closure updates/status to employees (e.g., telephone tree).

**2. Q. What is an essential employee?**

A. An essential employee is an individual whose duties are required to continue despite the closure of state or agency operations.

- Consider whether these designations may change over time, depending on the duration of the closure.
- Identify employees capable of performing an essential employee's work if the essential employee is unavailable. Consider whether any cross-training is needed now to prepare for such a circumstance.

### **II. PAY / LEAVE STATUS**

**3. Q. How will employee absences be handled during an emergency closure of agency operations or office location(s)?**

A. Non-temporary, salaried employees will not only be excused from duty but will also be compensated in accordance with state law and State Personnel Board Rule 16 provisions for emergency closure.

- Affected employees (those previously scheduled to work during the time that offices are now closed) may be excused from duty during an emergency closure for as long as necessary without a loss in pay. Note that some employees may be required to work as essential staff during a closure. (See Q4 below.)
- Unless instructed and able to telework, temporary and hourly employees will be placed on authorized leave without pay during a closure of state or agency operations.

**4. Q. How is compensation administered for essential staff who are required to come into work during an emergency closure?**

A. Employees identified by an agency as essential staff should be compensated as usual for regularly scheduled hours worked during an emergency closure. Essential employees who work during an emergency closure will not accrue any right to additional absence or additional or “double” compensation.

**5. Q. How does an emergency closure affect employees with scheduled leave during the emergency closure?**

A. An employee who is on pre-approved leave or compensatory time that commenced before an emergency closure will be required to use the paid leave or compensatory time, as scheduled, because the employee will be considered unaffected by the emergency closure in accordance with [State Personnel Board Rule 16](#).

### III. TELEWORK

**6. Must non-essential employees telework during the office closure?**

- A. It is at the agency head’s discretion whether non-essential employees are required to telework during an emergency office closure. Considerations include:
- Whether the closure of the office or worksite prevents the continuation of the employee’s regularly assigned work.
  - Whether power and/or internet outages in the area proximate to the employee’s regular worksite are ongoing and likely to impact the employee’s ability to telework from home. The answer to this consideration may change and should be monitored during the course of the emergency office/location closure.
  - Note: Agencies should exercise discretion to require telework in a consistent, non-discriminatory manner.
- B. Employees required to telework will be compensated as usual for regularly scheduled hours worked. Employees not required to telework will be compensated in accordance with state law and [State Personnel Board Rule 16](#) provisions for emergency closure.

**7. Q. How will telework be administered in the event employees are required to telework if able to do so during an emergency closure of agency operations?**

A. If the suspension of normal state and/or agency operations does not prevent an employee’s assigned work from continuing, then those able to work would be considered unaffected by the office closure and required to telework. Any employee required to telework during an emergency closure will receive the normal compensation for hours worked, but will not receive additional or “double” compensation. Employees required to telework will likewise receive no additional right to an absence.

**8. Q. Should normal telework policies be followed by employees required to telework during an emergency closure?**

**A.** Yes. Employees required to telework should adhere to all applicable telework policies, including the [Statewide Telework Policy](#). Employers should maximize flexibility.