



UNITED STATES OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT  
Washington, DC 20415

The Director

Wednesday, September 4, 2019

CPM 2019-18

**MEMORANDUM FOR: HEADS OF EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES**

FROM: MARGARET M. WEICHERT, ACTING DIRECTOR

Subject: Human Resources Flexibilities and Procedures for Hurricane Season

As the United States prepares to respond to Hurricane Dorian, the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) would like to remind agencies of the wide range of human resources (HR) flexibilities and procedures currently available to assist Federal employees affected by emergency situations.

**Weather and Safety Leave**

Weather and safety leave is a form of paid time off authorized under section 6329c of title 5, United States Code, and is typically authorized when OPM or an agency issues an operating status announcement.

Under OPM's weather and safety leave regulations, an agency may grant weather and safety leave when it has determined that employees cannot safely travel to, or perform work at, their normal worksite, a telework site, or other approved location because of severe weather or another emergency situation. An agency normally will not be able to provide weather and safety leave to a telework program participant who is not prevented from working safely at an approved telework site during severe weather or other emergency situations. Generally, employees with the ability to telework will not receive weather and safety leave as they are not prevented from performing work at an approved location.

While the general rule prohibits weather and safety leave for telework program participants, OPM regulations allow for certain exceptions. Agencies may provide weather and safety leave to a telework program participant if, in the agency's judgment, he or she could not have reasonably anticipated the severe weather or emergency and thus is not prepared to telework. (See 5 CFR 630.1605(a)(2)(i).) Additionally, agencies may provide weather and safety leave to a telework program participant if the employee is prepared to work at the telework site but is prevented from safely working there due to the severe weather or emergency situation. (See 5 CFR 630.1605(a)(2)(ii).) Agencies may consider exercising their authority to grant weather and safety leave to telework program participants on a case-by-case basis.

Additional guidance on weather and safety leave may be found in OPM's [Governmentwide Dismissal and Closure Procedures](#).

## **Telework**

OPM's weather and safety leave regulations emphasize the importance of telework in allowing employees to continue working during severe weather or other emergency situations. Telework continues to play a significant role during emergency situations by enabling a greater number of Federal employees to work and supporting continuity of operations. Agencies should continue to promote and incorporate telework into their agency emergency planning. We strongly encourage agencies to take steps to ensure that telework-ready employees are prepared to effectively telework and have access to agency IT systems and networks, as may be necessary, should an emergency or weather condition so warrant. See the [Telework Guidance](#) at Telework.gov.

## **Evacuation Payments**

Executive agencies may authorize advance payments, continuation of pay, and payments for travel and subsistence expenses to employees who are ordered to evacuate from an area because of imminent danger to their lives as a result of a severe weather condition or other emergency situation. Use of the evacuation payments authority is discretionary. The head of an employing agency or designated official must make the determination that an employee was officially ordered or authorized to evacuate. Agencies must follow the regulations in 5 CFR part 550, subpart D. Additional guidance may also be found in OPM's [Handbook on Pay and Leave Benefits for Federal Employees Affected by Severe Weather Conditions or Other Emergency Situation](#).

## **Emergency Leave Transfer Program (ELTP)**

In the event of a major disaster or emergency as declared by the President that results in severe adverse effects for a substantial number of employees, OPM may establish an Emergency Leave Transfer Program (ELTP). Under this program, Federal employees may donate annual leave to employees of the same or other agencies who are adversely affected, or have family members who are adversely affected, by the disaster or emergency. Agencies that have employees in need of assistance should contact their headquarters to report the need. OPM, in consultation with the Office of Management and Budget, will work with agency headquarters to assess the need to establish an ELTP.

Agency headquarters should send an email to [pay-leave-policy@opm.gov](mailto:pay-leave-policy@opm.gov) to request the establishment of an ELTP and to address any question or concerns. For example, to request an ELTP for Hurricane Dorian, an agency should place "ELTP for Hurricane Dorian" in the subject line of the email. For more information, please see our [Emergency Leave Transfer Program fact sheet](#) and OPM's most recent guidance on ELTPs—[CPM 2017-16, Guidance on Multiple Emergency Leave Transfer Programs](#).

## **Other Human Resources Flexibilities**

OPM released an updated version of the [Human Resources Flexibilities and Authorities Handbook](#) in August 2013. The *Handbook* provides detailed summaries and references for the many HR flexibilities and authorities which OPM administers. Please also see our [web page](#) that provides additional guidance regarding emergency situations.

**Additional Information**

Agency headquarters-level human resources offices may contact Pay and Leave at OPM at [pay-leave-policy@opm.gov](mailto:pay-leave-policy@opm.gov). Employees should contact their agency human resources or payroll office for further information on this memo.

cc: Chief Human Capital Officers (CHCOs), Deputy CHCOs, Human Resources Directors, and Work-Life Coordinators