



UNITED STATES OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT  
Washington, DC 20415

The Director

Wednesday, February 10, 2021  
CPM 2021-11

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

FROM: Kathleen M. McGettigan, Acting Director

Subject: Washington, DC, Area Dismissal and Closure Procedures during COVID-19 “Maximum Telework”

As the 2021 winter season progresses, the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) would like to take this opportunity to strongly encourage Federal departments and agencies to review OPM’s Governmentwide Dismissal and Closure Procedures (Procedures). These Procedures reflect the principle that the Federal Government’s vital business must continue without compromising the safety of our employees or the general public. Although the Procedures apply governmentwide, this memorandum refers to how operating status announcements are handled in the Washington, DC, area. The Procedures can be found at <https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/reference-materials/handbooks/dcdismisal.pdf>.

**Decision Making Process**

OPM keeps a constant watch of any weather event impacting the Washington, DC, area that includes monitoring conditions before, during, and after the occurrence in order to remain attuned to real-time developments. To make the operating status decision, OPM works directly with the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, including the National Weather Service, DC government, municipal and regional officials, along with the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority and other regional transportation officials regarding how to respond to severe weather, emergency situations, and other special events that cause disruptions in the Washington, DC, area. After coordination, OPM communicates the Director’s final decision on the Federal Government’s operating status in the Washington, DC, area through media outlets, social media, the OPM website, and the OPM Alert mobile app to reach its customers—e.g., Chief Human Capital Officers, agencies, employees, and others interested in following OPM’s operating status announcements (e.g., private sector companies).

**Maximum Telework Posture**

Although many Federal employees are in a “maximum telework” posture due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it is still extremely important for agencies to communicate expectations to **all employees** prior to an emergency. Operating status announcements are most effective if each employee understands what the announcement means and how to react. Therefore, agencies are strongly encouraged to ensure that **all employees** are familiar with these *Procedures* and the various operating status announcements and what options are available to them.

To illustrate the importance, I am providing an example of a recent snowstorm that occurred in the Washington, DC, area. The operating status announcement provided a 2-hour delayed arrival with the option for unscheduled leave and unscheduled telework. Employees in a “maximum telework” posture continued to work their regular hours since they were not impacted by the emergency. Telework employees were not authorized to receive up to 2 hours of weather and safety leave as they were not reporting to the worksite. Similarly, those employees designated as “emergency employees” were expected to report to their worksite on time unless otherwise directed by their agencies and did not receive up to 2 hours of weather and safety leave. However, those employees not designated as “emergency employees”, but who reported to the worksite on the day of the announcement were permitted to arrive for work up to 2 hours later than they would be expected to normally arrive. This category of employees was authorized to receive up to 2 hours of weather and safety leave since they reported to the worksite.

It is critical that all employees understand which human resources flexibilities are available to them during each type of operating status, such as unscheduled telework, unscheduled leave, leave without pay, alternative work schedule day off, etc. In an emergency, timing is crucial. Employees must be able to act under their own agency’s procedures when unscheduled telework or unscheduled leave are options, or when teleworking during office closures.

### **Impact on Contractors**

Agencies should be mindful that onsite contractors are also impacted by a change in the Government’s Operating Status. Agencies should consult with appropriate contracting officials to ensure contracts requiring onsite performance/access include contingency direction in the event of a federal dismissal or closure. To the extent practicable, such direction should address performance flexibilities including alternative worksites and/or telework.

### **Additional Information**

To further assist agencies, OPM is attaching a chart to this memorandum listing the various operating status announcements used during emergency situations. The chart explains how each announcement applies to different categories of employees during an operating status and will help inform agencies and employees of the options available under each announcement. The chart can also be found as an attachment in the *Procedures*.

Employees should contact their agency human resources office for further information on the implementation of the Procedures. For general information on Federal pay, leave, and work scheduling policies, please visit <http://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave>.

### **Attachment**

cc: Chief Human Capital Officers (CHCOs), Deputy CHCOs, and Human Resources Directors