



UNITED STATES OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT  
Washington, DC 20415

The Director

Thursday, December 4, 2003

**MEMORANDUM FOR: Heads Of Executive Departments And Agencies**

FROM: Kay Coles James  
Director

Subject: Washington, DC, Area Dismissal or Closure Procedures

Attached is the Office of Personnel Management's (OPM's) "Washington, DC, Area Dismissal or Closure Procedures."

These procedures will apply in situations that prevent significant numbers of employees in the Washington, DC, area from reporting for work on time or which require agencies to close all or part of their activities, including adverse weather conditions (snow emergencies, severe icing conditions, floods, and hurricanes), natural disasters, and other disruptions of Government operations (air pollution, disruption of power and/or water, interruption of public transportation, etc.). Federal Executive Boards and Federal Executive Associations have coordinated similar dismissal or closure procedures in other major metropolitan areas.

You may download a copy of the "Washington, DC, Area Dismissal or Closure Procedures" at [opm.gov/oca/compmemo/dismissal.asp](http://opm.gov/oca/compmemo/dismissal.asp). In addition, we have provided pay and leave guidance for Federal employees affected by Governmentwide dismissal or closure at [opm.gov/oca/compmemo/2003/2003-17a.asp](http://opm.gov/oca/compmemo/2003/2003-17a.asp).

**Status of Government Operations**

The attached guidance provides procedures that will be followed in the event of disruptions of Government operations. OPM will make announcements to the media as to whether Federal agencies in the Washington, DC, area are "**open**" or "**closed**," or operating under an "**unscheduled leave**," "**delayed arrival**," or "**early dismissal**" policy. **The attached procedures also provide information on OPM's and agencies' responsibilities in dismissal or closure situations.**

**Emergency Employees**

The procedures also include guidelines for designating "**emergency employees**" who are critical to agency operations in dismissal or closure situations. In addition, agencies may wish to identify a cadre of "**mission-critical**" **emergency employees** who might be activated during emergencies involving national security, extended emergencies, or other unique situations. Agencies must identify the emergency situations in which "mission-critical" emergency employees will be expected to report for work.

## **Telework Employees**

One of the major benefits of the telework program is the ability of telework employees to continue working at their alternative worksites during a disruption of Government operations. In recognition of the growing importance of teleworkers in the continuity of Government operations, agencies may wish to modify their current policies concerning teleworkers and emergency closures. An agency may wish to require that some or all of its teleworkers continue to work at their alternative worksites on their teleworkday during emergency situations when the agency is closed. An agency would not have to designate a teleworker as an emergency employee, but any requirement that a telework employee continue to work if the agency closes on his or her teleworkday should be included in the employee's formal or informal telework agreement.

## **Need for Coordinated Action**

The attached procedures were developed over a period of many years in consultation with the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments. As in the past, the attached procedures are based on the principle that the business of the Federal Government is vital to serving the public everywhere and that we must do so without compromising the safety of our employees.

**Agencies should avoid independent action** in the event of area-wide work disruptions because any changes in the working hours of Federal employees in this area must be coordinated carefully with municipal and regional officials in order to minimize disruption of the highway and mass transit systems.

## **Communicating Announcements**

Announcements of the current weather status and/or the status of Government operations will be available at <http://www.opm.gov/status/index.asp>. Recorded messages on operating status also will be provided by OPM's Office of Communications and Public Liaison on (202) 606-1900.

## **For More Information**

For more information on OPM's announcements on the status of Government operations, please contact OPM's Office of Communications and Public Liaison on (202) 606-1900. Agency Chief Human Capital Officers and/or Human Resources (HR) Directors may contact their assigned OPM Human Capital Officers. For additional information on Federal pay and leave programs and policies, including work scheduling policies, please visit <http://www.opm.gov/oca/index.asp>. Employees should contact their agency human resources offices for assistance.

cc: Chief Human Capital Officers  
Human Resources Directors

Attachments:

- Washington, DC, Area Dismissal or Closure Procedures
- Questions and Answers
- Furloughs Due to Extended Emergencies
- Emergency Situations that Prevent Employees from Reporting for Work
- Emergency Situations that Restrict Employees to Their Agency's Premises: "Shelter in Place"