



Office of the
Director

UNITED STATES OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT
Washington, DC 20415

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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 major disasters and other emergency situations (e.g., terrorist attacks, exposure to biohazards, and other severe hazardous conditions), adverse weather conditions (snow emergencies, severe icing conditions, floods, and hurricanes), natural disasters, and other incidents causing disruptions of Government operations (disruption of power and/or water, interruption of public transportation, closing of major transportation routes, 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. In addition, we have provided pay and leave guidance for Federal employees affected by Governmentwide dismissal or closure at opm.gov/oca/compmemo/dismissalQA.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

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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 maintaining 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 or on any of their regularly scheduled workdays 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 or on any of his or her regularly scheduled workdays 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/>. 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

Washington, DC, Area Dismissal or Closure Procedures

Introduction

The following guidelines apply to situations that prevent significant numbers of Federal 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 major disasters and other emergency situations (e.g., terrorist attacks, exposure to biohazards, and other severe hazardous conditions), adverse weather conditions (snow emergencies, severe icing conditions, floods, and hurricanes), natural disasters, and other incidents causing disruptions of Government operations (disruption of power and/or water, interruption of public transportation, closing of major transportation routes, etc.). Federal Executive Boards and Federal Executive Associations have coordinated similar dismissal or closure procedures in other major metropolitan areas. When there are disruptions of Government operations, the Office of Personnel Management (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 announcements are defined in the table below.

These procedures apply to employees in all executive agencies located inside the “Washington Capital Beltway” (the highway that circles the nation's capital). These procedures do not apply to employees of the U.S. Postal Service, the government of the District of Columbia, or private sector entities, including contractors. Agency facilities outside the Washington Capital Beltway may prefer to develop their own plans, since they are subject to different weather and traffic conditions than those inside the Beltway. In unusual situations, however, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) may issue guidelines affecting agency facilities outside the Washington Capital Beltway, as well.

It is essential that Federal agencies in the metropolitan area comply with this area-wide plan and the announced decisions on dismissal or closure. These 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.** Agencies generally look to OPM to coordinate any decisions to dismiss Federal employees from work with officials in local and Federal agencies, transportation authorities, and the media so as to minimize disruption of the highway and transit systems, reduce traffic congestion, and ensure that affected employees are treated as consistently as possible. Therefore, all employees are expected to report for work or remain at work unless specifically excused by their supervisors.

Agencies that find it necessary to exclude certain offices, activities, or categories of employees from this plan should notify OPM of such exemptions and update such notices when necessary. Application of this guidance must be consistent with the provisions of applicable collective bargaining agreements or other controlling policies, authorities, and instructions.

In addition, we have provided pay and leave guidance for employees affected by the “Washington, DC, Area Dismissal or Closures Procedures” at opm.gov/oca/compmemo/dismissalQA.asp.

Designating “Emergency Employees” and “Mission-Critical” Emergency Employees

Agencies should designate **emergency employees** who are critical to agency operations in dismissal or closure situations. Each agency head has the discretion to identify and designate those employees that he or she judges to be necessary to continue agency operations in any given emergency situation. There are no standard definitions or categories in this regard, and agency heads (or their designees, as applicable) are free to make such determinations based on the agency's unique mission requirements and/or circumstances. The designation of emergency employees may vary according to the particular nature of an exigency. Such designations should be part of an agency's emergency response/continuity of operations plans and should be communicated (preferably well in advance) to emergency employees, so that they can be prepared to support and sustain agency operations in an emergency.

In addition, agencies may wish to identify a cadre of “**mission-critical**” **emergency employees** who are expected to remain in contact with their agencies at all times during any closure situation and may be called to work during emergencies dealing with 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 and whether such employees must report for work at their regular worksites or alternative worksites.

Telework Employees

We recognize that employees who telework from home or from an alternative worksite are an invaluable resource during an emergency. Therefore, agencies may wish to modify their current policies concerning emergency situations to require telework employees to continue to work at their alternative worksites on their teleworkday or on any of their regularly scheduled workdays when the agency is closed. Any requirement that a telework employee continue to work if the agency closes on his or her teleworkday or on any of his or her regularly scheduled workdays should be included in the employee's formal or informal telework agreement. On a case-by-case basis, an agency may excuse a telework employee from duty during an emergency if the emergency adversely affects the telework site (e.g., disruption of electricity, loss of heat, etc.), if the teleworker faces a personal hardship that prevents him or her from working successfully at the telework site, or if the teleworker's duties are such that he or she cannot continue to work without contact with the regular worksite.

OPM'S RESPONSIBILITIES

1. In the Washington, DC, area, OPM is the Federal Government's point of contact with municipal governments and regional organizations, such as the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (METRO). OPM officials will consult with various officials, including appropriate D.C. government, municipal and regional officials before the Director makes a decision on closure, dismissal, or special leave treatment.

2. The Director of OPM will make a decision on whether to curtail Federal operations. This decision will be based on the need to keep Federal operations functioning as normally as possible and on concern for the safety of Federal employees.
3. We will notify agency Human Resources Directors and Chief Human Capital Officers of any decision to “close” Federal agencies, or announce an “**unscheduled leave,**” “**delayed arrival,**” or “**early dismissal**” policy. Information will be available at <http://www.opm.gov/status/>.

AGENCY RESPONSIBILITIES

1. At least annually, agencies should establish and disseminate written procedures for dismissal or closure to employees working in the Washington, DC, area. The notice should tell employees how they will be notified and include the text of the media announcements to be used and a detailed explanation of their meaning.
2. Agencies should notify their employees of the procedures for requesting leave when an “**unscheduled leave**” policy is announced. When an “**unscheduled leave**” policy is announced, employees must notify their agencies of their intent to take unscheduled annual leave, leave without pay, and/or the use of previously earned compensatory time off or earned credit hours under an alternative work schedule.
3. At least annually, agencies should identify those employees who **must** report for work and continue Government operations during a disruption of operations and notify them in writing that they are designated as “**emergency employees.**” The notice identifying employees as emergency employees should include the requirement that such employees report for or remain at work when operations are disrupted and an explanation that dismissal or closure announcements do not apply to them unless they are instructed otherwise. In addition, agencies may identify a cadre of “**mission-critical**” **emergency employees** who may be called to work during extended emergencies, emergencies dealing with national security, or other unique situations. **Agencies must identify the emergency situations in which “mission-critical” emergency employees will be expected to report for work and notify the “mission-critical” emergency employees of this policy.** Agencies should direct “mission-critical” emergency employees to report for work either at their regular worksite or alternative worksite. Further, “mission-critical” emergency employees are expected to remain in contact with their agencies at all times during any closure situation. Agencies may wish to issue communications and other equipment to “mission-critical” emergency employees to facilitate contact in these situations.

If an agency determines that a situation requires “**non-emergency employees**” to report for or remain at work when Government operations are disrupted, the agency should establish a procedure for notifying them individually.

4. An agency must include in the employee's formal or informal telework agreement any requirement that telework employees continue to work at their alternative worksites on

their teleworkday or on any of their regularly scheduled workdays when the agency is closed. At least annually, agencies should remind all teleworkers of this requirement.

5. Agencies must notify employees that if they are required to report for work and are not otherwise granted excused absence, they will be charged absence without leave (AWOL) for the period not worked and may potentially be disciplined for the AWOL at the agency's discretion.
6. Agencies are responsible for determining closure, dismissal, and leave policies for employees on shift work and alternative work schedules (i.e., flexible or compressed work schedules) and for informing employees of these policies.

Excused Absence

Agencies are encouraged to follow these procedures. However, agencies have discretionary authority to grant a reasonable amount of excused absence for individual hardships or circumstances unique to an employee. For example, factors such as distance, availability of public transportation, or available alternatives to childcare or eldercare may be considered.

No Additional Pay or Paid Time Off for Employees Who Must Work

Emergency employees and telework employees who are required to work during their regular tour of duty on a day when their agency is closed (or when other employees are dismissed early) are not entitled to receive overtime pay, credit hours, or compensatory time off for performing work during their regularly scheduled hours.

Extended Emergency Situations

In an emergency situation, Government operations may be disrupted for extended periods. OPM has provided numerous resources to enable you to continue the effective functioning of your organization during an emergency situation. This information is available at opm.gov/emergency. In addition, the following fact sheets offering further guidance on continuing operations during extended emergencies are available on OPM's website:

Emergency Situations that Prevent Employees from Reporting for Work

opm.gov/oca/compmemo/2003/PreventEmpsReportingforWork.asp

Emergency Situations that Restrict Employees to their Agency's Premises (“Shelter in Place”)

opm.gov/oca/compmemo/2003/ShelterInPlace.asp

Furloughs Due to Extended Emergencies

opm.gov/oca/compmemo/2003/Furloughs.asp

Status of Government Operations

DISRUPTIONS BEFORE THE WORKDAY BEGINS	
<p>The Office of Personnel Management will provide one of the following five announcements to the media when a disruption occurs before the workday begins. These announcements do NOT apply to individuals who are designated as “emergency employees.” Emergency employees are expected to report for work on time unless excused by their supervisors.</p>	
Announcement	What Announcement Means
<p>1. “Federal agencies in the Washington, DC, area are OPEN; employees are expected to report for work on time.”</p>	<p>Employees are expected to report for work on time.</p>
<p>2. “Federal agencies in the Washington, DC, area are OPEN under an UNSCHEDULED LEAVE policy.”</p>	<p>Employees who cannot report for work may request unscheduled leave for their entire scheduled workday. <i>Employees must notify their supervisors of their intent to take unscheduled leave.</i></p> <p>Emergency employees are expected to report for work on time.</p>
<p>3. “Federal agencies in the Washington, DC, area are OPEN under a DELAYED ARRIVAL policy. Employees should plan to arrive for work no more than xx hours later than they would normally arrive.”</p>	<p>Employees should plan their commutes so that they arrive for work no more than xx hours later than they would normally arrive. Employees who arrive for work more than xx hours later than their normal arrival time will be charged annual leave or leave without pay for the additional period of absence from work.</p> <p>Telework employees are expected to report for work on time.</p> <p>Emergency employees are expected to report for work on time.</p>
<p>4. “Federal agencies in the Washington, DC, area are OPEN under a DELAYED ARRIVAL/UNSCHEDULED LEAVE policy. Employees should plan to arrive for work no more than xx hours later than they would normally arrive, and employees who cannot report for work may take unscheduled leave.”</p>	<p>Employees should plan their commutes so that they arrive for work no more than xx hours later than they would normally arrive. Employees who arrive for work more than xx hours later than their normal arrival time will be charged annual leave or leave without pay for the additional period of absence from work.</p> <p>Telework employees are expected to report for work on time.</p> <p>Employees who cannot report for work may request unscheduled leave for their entire scheduled workday.</p> <p>Emergency employees are expected to report for work on time.</p>

Announcement	What Announcement Means
5. “Federal agencies are CLOSED. ”	Federal agencies are closed. Emergency employees are expected to report for work on time. Non-emergency employees (including employees on pre-approved leave) will be granted excused absence for the number of hours they were scheduled to work . This does not apply to employees on leave without pay, workers' compensation, suspension, or in another nonpay status. Telework employees may be expected to work from their telework sites, as specified in their telework agreements. Employees on alternative work schedules are not entitled to another AWS day off in lieu of the workday on which the agency is closed.

DISRUPTIONS AFTER THE WORKDAY BEGINS

The Office of Personnel Management will provide the following announcement to the media when a disruption occurs after the workday begins. This announcement does not apply to individuals who are designated as “emergency employees.” Emergency employees are expected to remain at work unless excused by their supervisors.

Announcement	What Announcement Means
“Federal agencies in the Washington, DC, area are operating under an EARLY DISMISSAL policy. Employees should be dismissed by their agencies xx hours earlier than their normal departure time from work.”	<p>Employees should be dismissed by their agencies relative to their normal departure times from work. For example, if a 3-hour “early dismissal” policy is announced, workers who normally leave their offices at 4:00 p.m. should leave at 1:00 p.m. Employees who must leave work earlier than their <i>early dismissal time</i> will be charged annual leave or leave without pay from the time of their departure through the remainder of their regularly scheduled workday.</p> <p>Employees on pre-approved leave or unscheduled leave for the entire day should be charged leave for the entire day.</p> <p>Emergency employees are expected to remain at work.</p> <p>Telework employees may be expected to continue to work from their telework sites, as specified in their telework agreements.</p>

PAY AND LEAVE GUIDANCE FOR FEDERAL EMPLOYEES AFFECTED BY “WASHINGTON, DC, AREA DISMISSAL OR CLOSURE PROCEDURES”

Questions and Answers

These questions and answers must be read with the “Washington, DC, Dismissal or Closure Procedures” available on OPM’s Web site at opm.gov/oca/compmemo/dismissal.asp.

Dismissal or Closure Before the Workday Begins

Q1. What does it mean when it is announced that Federal agencies are “CLOSED?” Are all employees excused from duty?

A1. When Federal agencies are closed, most employees, except those designated as **“emergency employees,”** are excused from duty for the number of hours they were scheduled to work. In addition, agencies may also require **“mission-critical” emergency employees** to report for work and may require telework employees to work from their telework site on their telework day or on any of their regularly scheduled workdays. (See question 2.)

Q2. Who designates an employee as an “emergency employee?”

A2. The head of an agency or his or her designee designates **“emergency employees”** for his or her agency. The term **“emergency employee”** is used to designate those employees who must report for work in an emergency situations as determined by their employing agency. The head of an agency or his or her designee generally should identify emergency personnel at least annually and notify them in writing that they are designated as “emergency employees.” There are no standard definitions or categories of “emergency employees,” and agency heads (or their designees) must make such determinations based on the agency’s unique mission requirements and/or circumstances. The designation of an “emergency employee” may even vary according to the particular nature of an exigency. The notice identifying employees as “emergency employees” should include the requirement that “emergency employees” report for, or remain at, work in emergency situations and an explanation that dismissal or closure announcements do not apply to them unless they are instructed otherwise.

In addition, agencies may identify a cadre of **“mission critical” emergency employees** who are expected to remain in contact with their agencies at all times during any closure situation and may be called to work during national emergencies, 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 and notify the “mission-critical” emergency employees of this policy.** Agencies should direct “mission-critical” emergency employees to report for work either at their regular worksite or alternative worksite.

An agency may determine that circumstances justify excusing an “emergency employee” or a “mission-critical” emergency employee from duty, and he or she may be granted excused absence. If an agency determines that a situation requires “non-emergency employees” to report

for or remain at work when Government operations are disrupted, the agency should establish a procedure for notifying them individually.

Q3. Are employees who telework required to work when their agencies are closed?

A3. Agencies may choose to require teleworkers to continue to work when the agency is closed on their regular teleworkday or on any of their regularly scheduled workdays. An agency should include such a requirement in any formal or informal telework agreement. An agency that requires teleworkers to report may, on a case-by-case basis, excuse a telework employee from duty during an emergency if the emergency adversely affects the telework site (e.g., disruption of electricity, loss of heat, etc.), if the telework employee faces a personal hardship that prevents his or her working successfully at the telework site (e.g., no alternative child/elder care available), or if the teleworker's duties are such that he or she cannot continue to work without contact with the regular worksite.

Q4. I was on pre-approved annual leave on a day when my agency was closed due to a snow emergency. Should the agency charge me annual leave for that day?

A4. No. If an agency is closed prior to the beginning of a workday, an employee may not be charged leave for that day. An employee on pre-approved annual or sick leave is granted excused absence for the entire day. (Note: This does not apply to employees on leave without pay, leave without pay for military duty, suspension, or in another nonpay status on the workday before and after the closure. These employees are not entitled to excused absence and should remain in their current status.)

Q5. I was on official travel in California on a workday when my agency was closed. Should I have been given excused absence for that day?

A5. If the closure of your agency made it impossible for you to continue work--i.e., your travel assignment required frequent contact with your agency--excused absence may be appropriate. However, if your work while on travel is not affected by the closure of your installation, you are expected to continue working. Your agency is responsible for making the decision regarding whether you are required to continue working or are granted excused absence under these circumstances.

Q6. Does an employee on leave without pay receive paid excused absence when the agency is closed?

A6. No. An employee on leave without pay, workers' compensation, suspension, or in another nonpay status does not receive excused absence when an agency is closed. An employee in a nonpay status has no expectation of working and receiving pay for a day during which the agency is closed and is therefore not entitled to be paid for his or her absence.

Q7. I am on an alternative work schedule (AWS). My agency was closed on my regular AWS day off. Shouldn't I get another day off since I worked extra hours to get an AWS day off?

A7. No. There is no entitlement to an "in-lieu-of" day off for employees who are not scheduled to work on a day when an agency undergoes closure or dismissal.

Some alternative work schedules allow an employee to meet his or her biweekly work requirement in less than 10 working days. If you participate in this type of work schedule, you did not work extra hours; you were simply fulfilling your biweekly work requirement. Your regular AWS day off is a scheduled nonworkday. An employee cannot be excused from duty on a nonworkday. Therefore, the excused absence does not apply to you. Your human resources office has further information on your agency's policies and requirements concerning alternative work schedules.

Q8. What does it mean when an "unscheduled leave" policy is announced?

A8. When an "unscheduled leave" policy is announced, employees not designated as "emergency employees" may request unscheduled annual leave or leave without pay without the prior approval of their supervisors. Non-emergency employees must inform their supervisors of their intent to take unscheduled annual leave or leave without pay. Employees designated as "emergency employees" are expected to report for work on time.

Q9. A 2-hour "delayed arrival" policy was announced, but I was 3 hours late reporting for work. Should my agency charge me leave? How much?

A9. When a "delayed arrival" policy is announced, non-emergency employees are expected to report for work no later than the designated number of hours (in your case, 2 hours) past their normal arrival time. A non-emergency employee who arrives later than the designated number of hours should be charged annual leave for the excess time (in your case, 1 hour). However, in the case of unusual circumstances or hardship, an agency may choose to grant excused absence for the excess time. Employees designated as "emergency employees" are expected to report for work on time.

(Agencies may use the guidance in OPM's "Handbook on Alternative Work Schedules, December 1996" (section 12, "Flexible Work Schedules," paragraph 1) to determine the "normal arrival and departure times" of employees on flexible schedules. The handbook is available on OPM's Web site at opm.gov/oca/aws/index.htm.)

Q10. When a dismissal or closure announcement is made, are "emergency employees" and other employees who are required to work entitled to receive overtime pay, credit hours, or compensatory time off for regular hours worked?

A10. No. Employees who are required to work during their regular tour of duty on a day when their agency is closed (or employees are dismissed early) are not entitled to receive overtime pay, credit hours, or compensatory time off for regular hours worked.

Q11. What action may an agency take against an employee who is required to work on a day the agency is closed but who does not report for work?

A11. An employee may not be charged leave on a day when his or her agency is closed. In unique situations, an agency may determine that circumstances justify excusing an emergency employee or nonemergency employee from duty, and he or she may be granted excused absence without further action. However, if an employee who is required to work fails to report for duty without adequate reason for his or her absence, the agency may choose to place the employee on absence without leave (AWOL), and the employee may potentially be disciplined for the AWOL at the agency's discretion. The agency makes the determination as to whether the employee has adequate reason for his or her absence.

Early Dismissal After the Workday Begins

Q12. When the Government announces an "early dismissal" policy, may I leave immediately to join my carpool?

A12. When OPM authorizes an "early dismissal" policy, employees should be dismissed **relative to their normal departure times** from work. For example, if a 3-hour early dismissal is announced as a result of a snowstorm or hurricane, workers who normally leave their offices at 5:00 p.m. would be authorized to leave at 2:00 p.m. (i.e., the employee's *early dismissal time*).

(Agencies may use the guidance in OPM's "Handbook on Alternative Work Schedules, December 1996" (section 12, "Flexible Work Schedules," paragraph 1) to determine the "normal arrival and departure times" of employees on flexible schedules. The handbook is available on OPM's Web site at opm.gov/oca/aws/index.htm.)

Supervisors **may** exempt individual employees from *early dismissal times* under this policy only to avoid hardships (e.g., when there is no available public transportation or no alternative forms of child/elder care are available to the employee). (See question 13.) Agencies may require that telework employees who are working at their telework site complete their regularly scheduled workday. We note that the purpose of the "early dismissal" policy is to allow an orderly release of Federal employees in the Washington, DC, area so as to avoid traffic gridlock and overcrowding of the public transit systems.

Q13. If an employee leaves work before an "early dismissal" policy is announced, or before his or her *early dismissal time*, how much annual leave or leave without pay should be charged? Can the supervisor exempt an employee from the *early dismissal time*?

A13. An employee who leaves work before an "early dismissal" policy is announced, or before his or her *early dismissal time*, should be charged annual leave or leave without pay beginning at the time the employee left work and for the remainder of his or her scheduled workday. However, agencies may exempt individual employees from *early dismissal times* and grant a reasonable amount of excused absence to allow an employee to leave work early if he or she has an individual hardship or unique circumstance. For example, factors such as distance, availability of public transportation, or available alternatives to childcare or eldercare may be considered.

Q14. How are employees who are on pre-approved leave treated when an “early dismissal” policy is announced?

A14. Employees on pre-approved (or unscheduled) annual or sick leave for the entire workday when an “early dismissal” policy is announced should be charged annual or sick leave for the entire workday. Employees scheduled to take pre-approved leave after their *early dismissal time* may not be charged leave for that time period. (See question 15.)

Q15. I was scheduled to leave my office at 3:00 p.m. for a doctor’s appointment (taking 1 ½ hours of sick leave). My agency dismissed employees 2 hours early, which meant my *early dismissal time* was 2:30. Should I be charged 1 ½ hours of sick leave?

A15. No. When an “early dismissal” policy is announced, an agency should grant excused absence for the remainder of the workday following the employee’s *early dismissal time* even if the employee is scheduled to take leave after his or her *early dismissal time*.

Q16. I was on official travel and was scheduled to return to the office at 10 a.m. However, my flight was delayed and did not land until 4 p.m. My agency dismissed employees early that day at 12:00 p.m. I am not an “emergency employee.” Am I entitled to receive additional pay or paid time off to make up for the 4 hours I was on travel after the agency closed?

A16. No. There is no entitlement to additional pay or paid time off (e.g., compensatory time off or credit hours) for employees who were on travel during normal work hours when an agency closes early.

Q17. What happens if an employee is scheduled to return from leave in the afternoon, and employees are dismissed from work before the employee’s scheduled arrival time?

A17. If an employee is scheduled to return from leave after an “early dismissal” policy is announced, the agency should charge leave for the period prior to the employee’s *early dismissal time* and grant excused absence for the remainder of the workday following the employee’s *early dismissal time*.

Q18. We have an employee who commutes to his regular worksite in Washington, DC, from Philadelphia. He also teleworks from home 2 days a week. Is the employee excused from duty if Federal agencies are closed in Philadelphia because of a snow emergency, but Washington, DC, Federal agencies are not? The employee has a young child who would be home if the child’s pre-school center is closed in Philadelphia, and he would not be able to work from home.

A18. Depending on the policy of his employing agency, an employee who teleworks from a remote location may be expected to continue working through any dismissal or closure of his or her regular worksite. In this scenario, however, since the employee’s regular worksite in Washington, DC, is not closed, he would be expected to report for work at his alternative work site in Philadelphia or request annual leave or leave without pay.