



STATE OF ARKANSAS

Department of Veterans Affairs
501 Woodlane Drive, Suite 230C
Little Rock, AR 72201
(501) 683-1386 / FAX (501) 682-4833

Asa Hutchinson
Governor

Nathaniel (Nate) Todd
Director

PERSONNEL

ADVAP 2-4

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Inclement Weather Work Policy

1. PURPOSE:

The purpose of this regulation is to establish a policy applicable to all employees regarding the release or excusal of employees under emergency conditions. This regulation takes precedence over all other regulations related to closings, unscheduled leave, delayed reporting, and early release of agency employees. This policy is in accordance with the Governor's Policy Directive (GPD7).

2. DEFINITIONS:

A. **Inclement Weather:** conditions that constitute a hazardous weather event, where local weather conditions prevent employees from traveling to work safely. Inclement weather and other unforeseen conditions are serious in nature and can occur with little or no warning. Conditions include snow and ice that make roadways impassable, dangerous wind, rain and other conditions related to extreme weather.

B. **Emergency Essential Employees:** designation for personnel deemed vital to the operation of the agency, whose presence is required regardless of the existence of an emergency condition and whose absence from duty would endanger the safety and well-being of the Veterans in our care. Emergency Essential Employees are expected to report to work or remain at work regardless of the conditions.

C. **Non-Emergency Essential Employees:** designation for all other personnel not performing an emergency function.

D. **Unscheduled Leave:** Leave that is taken that was not previously coordinated with a supervisor.

3. GENERAL:

The safety of our people and equipment is paramount to accomplishing the mission of the Arkansas Department of Veterans Affairs. However as a general rule, all supervisors and employees must understand that their office or activity will be open each regular workday regardless of weather conditions, unless a determination is made that their Arkansas Department of Veterans Affairs facility is closed. With this background it is important that we coordinate and plan in advance for the possible tardiness and early release of employees, as well as appropriate leave policies. This process will help avoid confusion and conflict on the correct status employees should be in if there is inclement weather.

4. DESIGNATION OF PERSONNEL:

A. Nursing Home Administrators, Cemetery Directors, State Veterans Service Officer, Deputy Director, and Director will designate each of their personnel as either emergency essential, or non-emergency essential utilizing the definitions contained in this regulation.

B. Personnel designated as "emergency essential" will be (1) designated by job title and location, and (2) notified **by memorandum** that they are expected to be at work, regardless of weather conditions and should make plans accordingly.

C. Because of the unique circumstances of emergency situations, and the flexibilities required, supervisor may designate additional non-emergency essential employees as emergency essential employees with little or no notice if the presence at a designated worksite is necessary to avoid or mitigate serious damage to public health, safety or welfare, and/or perform ADVA duties to accomplish mission critical tasks. (Example: normally, all members of human resources are designated as non-emergency essential personnel; however they may all be emergency essential the day payroll runs bi-weekly.) Furthermore, non-emergency essential personnel may be recalled to perform emergency functions, if the need arises.

D. Personnel designated as essential will be identified by position and provided to the Deputy Director no later than October 1st of each year. Individuals identified as essential will be notified of such via memorandum.

5. PROCEDURES:

A. Any inclement weather policy announcement will likely be made before the beginning of the normal duty date. Any employee's decision of whether to depart for work earlier or later, or at all, should not be based solely on the announcement of the initial inclement weather policy, but rather, that decision is an individual responsibility based on local conditions and the individual's own assessment of what road conditions they feel they can safely negotiate. Safety should be a primary consideration. Leave for absences will be charged as discussed below.

B. The Deputy Director will make a recommendation to the Director on the inclement weather announcement and any further instructions, if applicable. The decision to release employees (defined as excusal from further scheduled duty without charge to leave), authorize unscheduled leave on an agency-wide basis, or close facilities to the public will be made by the Director.

C. Following the decision to excuse employees, the Deputy Director will coordinate with the public affairs office for the publication of appropriate announcements with local media outlets. If the event occurs during normal work hours, the Deputy Director will notify supervisors. A State Executive Order may take precedence over existing policy.

D. When the decision is made to excuse employees, all employees may be released, except for those identified as “emergency essential” personnel. Emergency Essential employees will carry out their emergency essential tasks, but may be released at the discretion of their supervisor depending on the actual situation.

E. Policy established by this regulation concerns only the official excusal of employees. Individuals, who by their own personal circumstances, seek early release or who are not able to report to work due to these circumstances when the facility is otherwise open for business must use established procedures for requesting leave.

6. LOCALIZED CONDITIONS:

A. The determination that inclement weather exists and the responsibility for assessment and decision are as follows:

- In the Little Rock metropolitan area: The Deputy Director is responsible for assessing the local situation and making recommendations to the Director. The Director will make the final decision on the course of action. The Deputy Director is delegated this decision authority in the absence of the Director.
- In the area outside of Little Rock metropolitan area: The Deputy Director or the highest level field supervisor (at the discretion of the Deputy Director) will determine when the inclement weather policy is implemented based on weather conditions in different parts of the State. If the agency administrator chooses to delegate this authority to the field supervisors, such delegation should be made immediately and communicated to the employees under the supervisors.

7. ADMINISTRATIVE GUIDELINES:

A. In the event of inclement weather, there are five different statuses that the Arkansas Department of Veterans Affairs could be operating, Open, Open with the option for unscheduled leave, Open with XX hour delayed reporting with the option for unscheduled leave, Open with XX hour early departure, and Facilities closed to the public. Appendix A encapsulates this section’s guidelines in a simple reference table.

(1) Open -

a. This is the normal state of the Arkansas Department of Veterans Affairs and all facilities and services are available to the public.

b. All employees are expected to report to their worksites at their normal reporting times and remain at their worksites until their normal dismissal times.

c. Normal leave and attendance rules are in effect.

(2) Open With Option for Unscheduled Leave

a. An emergency determination has been made that because of inclement weather, traffic or highway conditions to allow for unscheduled leave at the beginning of a workday.

b. All emergency essential employees are expected to report to their worksites on time unless otherwise directed by their supervisory chain of command not to report, or delay reporting.

c. All non-emergency essential employees, including those on flex-time schedules will be authorized to be absent for the entire workday should circumstances require it. Non-emergency essential employees not reporting for work, arriving late, or leaving early under an unscheduled leave determination will not be disciplined for tardiness or absence, but will be charged paid leave or leave without pay, as appropriate, for the period between their regularly scheduled official starting time and their arrival time, for the whole workday, or for the period of time from their departure from the workplace, and their regularly scheduled dismissal time, as appropriate. Employees must notify their supervisors of their intentions as soon as possible if they intend to request unscheduled leave.

(3) Open With a 2 Hour Delayed Reporting With Option For Unscheduled Leave

a. An emergency determination has been made that delayed reporting of employees is necessary due to an emergency situation or hazardous conditions. The Deputy Director will make a determination on the number of hours to delay reporting to minimize the safety risk to personnel.

b. All emergency essential employees are expected to report to their worksites on time unless otherwise directed by their supervisory chain of command not to report, or delay reporting.

c. Non-emergency essential employees will be expected to report at the time indicated and perform work from what then becomes the official start time until the end of the normal duty day. Once the revised reporting time is reached, normal notification policies apply for employees to request leave. The period from the normal start time, to the revised reporting time, is considered:

- Previously approved leave are charged leave for this period. Employees arriving after the revised start time will be charged the full amount of time involved in the tardiness, and employees not coming to work at all will be charged a full days absence.

(4) Open With a 2 Hour Early Departure

a. An emergency determination has been made that early dismissal of employees is necessary due to an emergency situation or hazardous conditions.

b. All emergency essential employees are expected to remain at their worksites until normal dismissal time unless otherwise directed by their supervisory chain of command. Additionally, emergency essential employees may be required to work past their normal dismissal time as mission needs dictate.

c. Non-emergency essential employees will be released at what will become a revised dismissal time. Prior to the revised dismissal time, normal notification policies apply for employees to request leave. The period from the revised dismissal time to the normal dismissal time, is considered:

- Previously approved leave are charged leave for entire workday as applicable. If a non-emergency essential employee requests leave, and is permitted to leave work prior to the announcement of an official early dismissal, they will be charged with leave for the remainder of the workday. Non-emergency essential employees who leave work early after an announcement of an official early dismissal will be charged leave for the period between their departure and the end of the normal duty day.

(5) Facilities Closed to the Public

a. An emergency determination has been made that the closure of facilities is necessary due to an emergency situation or hazardous conditions.

b. All emergency essential employees are expected to report to their worksites on time unless otherwise directed by their supervisory chain of command not to report, or delay reporting.

c. All non-emergency essential employees are excused as follows:

- Inclement weather attendance code INCL, a non-chargeable leave. Employees on previously approved leave are charged leave for this period.

B. Emergency essential employees who ensure operation and mission capability for Veterans in our care will be required to report for duty, or remain on duty during these

situations. Consideration may be given, in the event extreme conditions delay reporting or make reporting impossible.

- Employees who are required or approved to report to and remain at the work site after an emergency situation has been declared, shall be compensated by being awarded compensatory time or additional pay as declared eligible and specified under Arkansas Department of Veterans Affairs or Arkansas Department of Finance and Administration regulations and/or policy concerning work hours and overtime.

8. TWENTY-FOUR HOUR AND SEVEN-DAY FACILITIES:

State employees who are required to remain on duty until they are relieved may be reimbursed for any additional expenses incurred by their obligation to remain at their duty station. Expenses that could be reimbursed include, but are not limited to, child care, transportation and meals. Proper documentation must be submitted and approval granted by an appropriate agency official as set out in the General Accounting Procedures.

9. INDIVIDUAL INQUIRIES

A. Employees must use their chain-of-command as to whether they should report to their facility because of weather forecasts or current weather conditions, or other emergency situations. Employees may also consult the following for updated information:

- All employees of the Arkansas Department of Veterans Affairs can call their first line supervisor for the most current facility status.
- The Arkansas Department of Veterans Affairs social media presence on Facebook.
- Local television and radio media outlets.
- Information concerning the early release of employees will be at the discretion of the supervisor. Public Affairs will contact the media to make the public aware of early closure.
- General announcements affecting state employees can also be found at www.Arkansas.gov.

B. Each department will establish an alert roster. If in doubt as to whether to report for work or not, all employees should call their first-line supervisor or follow their chain-of command for specific information.

9. SUPERSESSION: This procedure supersedes ADVAP 2-4, January 1, 2014, in its entirety.

By:

Nathaniel (Nate) Todd
Director

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