

UNITED STATES OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT



Washington, DC, Area Dismissal and Closure Procedures

December 2011

a New Day for the Federal Service

A Message from the Director of the U.S. Office of Personnel Management

The U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) is pleased to issue an update of the *Washington, DC, Area Dismissal and Closure Procedures*. Last year, we introduced the unscheduled telework option as a way for agencies and employees to maintain productivity and continuity of operations during weather events and other emergencies without compromising the safety of our employees or the general public. This flexibility was developed in recognition of our evolving use of technology and increased use of telework and other workplace flexibilities. The unscheduled telework option has successfully allowed Federal employees to telework during various weather events and other emergencies over the past year.

Agency-Specific Emergencies

For agency-specific emergencies, OPM continues to believe that each agency is in the best position to determine the appropriate course of action. For example, power outages or flooding in a particular building could affect one or several facilities without requiring all agencies to take action. Agencies have the authority to release employees and/or close individual facilities to the public on a localized, building-by-building basis. Each agency should have a method for communicating and updating operating status announcements to employees as part of the agency's emergency procedures.

Employees Need Empowerment to Act

As part of the overall communication process for Governmentwide operating procedures, agencies should empower employees to follow OPM's operating status announcements. It is important that employees are comfortable with the operating procedures and announcements in order to respond quickly without the need for permission. Agencies must develop policies and procedures, subject to any applicable collective bargaining requirements, and where applicable, as defined in written telework agreements.

Agencies should inform and remind their employees now about the updated *Washington, DC, Area Dismissal and Closure Procedures*. In an emergency situation, timing is very important. Employees should follow OPM announcements and any additional agency-specific procedures when an emergency occurs. Employees must follow their own agency's procedures for notifying supervisors or other agency officials when unscheduled telework or unscheduled leave are options.

Continued Migration to Telework

OPM strongly encourages agencies to review their telework arrangements and to establish new telework agreements with all employees who are (1) scheduled to telework or (2) telework on an occasional or ad hoc basis and thus have the potential to telework (including, e.g., unscheduled telework) at any time during the year, including during severe weather conditions and other emergency situations. Telework strongly enhances continuity during severe weather conditions and emergency situations, but only if we begin telework practices before the emergency occurs. Based on positive feedback from

agencies and employees, we expect to have even more of the Federal workforce working during periods when unscheduled telework is announced.

New OPM Operating Status Announcements to Improve Emergency Tool Kit

Learning from the past year's widely varied emergency events, OPM considered how to better reflect unexpected emergency situations. A 5.8 magnitude earthquake is different from a snowstorm at night, and a snowstorm at night is different from a snowstorm in the middle of the workday. Each must be handled differently. After coordinating with our stakeholders, OPM is adding three new announcements to its emergency tool kit which includes a staggered early departure with final departure time, immediate departure, and shelter-in-place. OPM believes that these additional announcements will give us the flexibility we need to respond appropriately to unfolding events.

Importance of Following Announcements

The *Washington, DC, Area Dismissal and Closure Procedures* have been developed in consultation with Federal agencies and the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments and are available at <https://www.opm.gov/oca/compmemo/dismissal.pdf>. It is essential that covered Federal agencies and employees comply with OPM's procedures. These policies are based on the principle that the Federal Government's vital business must be carried on without compromising the safety of our employees and the general public. Agencies possess the authority to release employees and/or close individual facilities to the public on a localized, building-by-building basis, and should exercise this authority during localized emergencies such as building fire or limited flooding. However, in the event of area-wide work disruptions, agencies should avoid independent action because changes in the commuting hours of Federal employees can result in dramatic disruption of the highway and mass transit systems. Following OPM's announcements and policies will allow for coordination with municipal and regional officials, and will reduce disruption of the highway and transit systems. This will both reduce traffic congestion, and ensure that affected employees are treated as consistently as possible.

Strategic Use of OPM Operating Status Announcements

OPM's ultimate goal is to maintain continuity of operations while ensuring the safety of Federal employees and the general public. To achieve this goal, OPM is committed to making operating status decisions as far in advance as feasible and strategically using these announcements to reduce uncertainty and minimize demands on transportation infrastructure.

Thank you for your cooperation. Together, we will keep our workers safe, and will continue to conduct the business of the American people.

John Berry
Director

Washington, DC, Area Dismissal and Closure Procedures

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I. Introduction

The following procedures apply to situations that prevent significant numbers of Federal employees who work inside the Washington Capital Beltway (referred to as the Washington, DC, area, for purposes of these procedures) from reporting to the office on time or remaining at the office for the full workday and for situations which require Federal offices to close to the public, including emergencies, severe weather conditions, natural disasters, and other incidents causing disruptions of Government operations. For continuity of operations, it is important for certain Federal Government operations to continue to function, even when offices are closed to the public.

A. Geographic Area of Application of Emergency Procedures

The *Washington, DC, Area Dismissal and Closure Procedures* apply to employees in all Executive agencies with offices located inside the “Washington Capital Beltway” (the highway that circles the Nation’s capital). In addition, some agencies may determine to apply these same procedures to facilities located in the portions of the Counties and jurisdictions that are outside of the Capital Beltway but adjacent to the District of Columbia (i.e., Montgomery and Prince George’s Counties in Maryland; Arlington and Fairfax Counties, and the independent cities of Alexandria, Fairfax, and Falls Church in Virginia). However, other agencies may determine to develop separate plans for these facilities, since Federal offices in areas outside the Capital Beltway may be subject to different weather and traffic conditions than those inside the Beltway. In very rare circumstances, the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) may issue guidelines affecting agency facilities outside the Washington Capital Beltway. Note, however, that OPM’s procedures do not apply to employees of the legislative branch, judicial branch, U.S. Postal Service, the government of the District of Columbia, or private sector entities, including contractors.

B. Importance of Following OPM Announcements for Washington, DC, Area Emergencies

It is essential that covered Federal agencies and employees comply with the area-wide plan and OPM announcements concerning dismissal or closure of Federal offices to the public in the Washington, DC, area. OPM consults with Federal agencies, the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, and others for these dismissal policies. These policies are based on the principle that the Federal Government’s vital business must be carried on without compromising the safety of our employees and the general public. Agencies possess the authority to release employees and/or close individual facilities to the public on a localized, building-by-building basis (e.g., building fire or local flood). Agencies should avoid independent action in the event of area-wide work disruptions, however, because any change in the commuting hours of Federal employees must be coordinated carefully with municipal and regional officials in order to minimize disruption of the highway and mass transit systems. Following OPM’s announcements and policies will reduce disruption of the highway and transit systems, reduce traffic congestion, and ensure that affected employees are treated as consistently as possible.

Agencies should inform and remind their employees annually about the *Washington, DC, Area Dismissal and Closure Procedures*. In an emergency situation, timing is very important. Employees should follow OPM announcements and any additional agency-specific procedures when an emergency occurs. Employees must follow their own agency's procedures for notifying supervisors or other agency officials when unscheduled telework or unscheduled leave are options.

C. Importance of Telework during Dismissal or Closure

The Federal Government uses telework as a means to allow Federal employees to complete their work at an approved alternative worksite. The Telework Enhancement Act of 2010 (the Act) defines "telework" or "teleworking" as a work flexibility arrangement under which an employee performs the duties and responsibilities of such employee's position, and other authorized activities, from an approved worksite other than the location from which the employee would otherwise work. Agencies should incorporate telework arrangements into their agency emergency planning so that employees who would prefer to telework in the event of such an emergency, and who could perform duties from an alternate location, may do so.

The unscheduled telework option allows a greater number of Federal employees to work during emergency situations. Recognizing our evolving use of technology, unscheduled telework allows the Federal Government to maximize operational efficiency to the extent practicable without compromising the safety of our employees and the general public during heavy snow accumulation, significant road closures due to various events, and other emergency situations. In emergencies, OPM will make announcements to the public and the media on the status of operations for Federal agencies in the Washington, DC, area. Section IV of this Handbook provides additional guidance on the use of unscheduled telework for dismissal and closure procedures.

Emergency Planning

The Act requires all agencies to implement telework arrangements into their Continuity of Operations (COOP) plans. In preparation for COOP emergencies, agencies should have telework policies and agreements in place that encourage employees to participate in telework, more generally, and provide employees who participate in telework with instructions, procedures, and expectations in the event they need to respond to a COOP event. Agencies should ensure that the equipment, technology, and technical support have been tested; that employees are comfortable with technology and communications methods; and that supervisors and managers are comfortable managing a dispersed workgroup.

Requirement for Written Telework Agreement

The Act requires a written telework agreement and the successful completion of interactive telework training for any employee entering into a telework agreement. The Act also calls for the provision of interactive telework training for all managers of teleworkers. A telework employee and his or her supervisor should enter into a written agreement for every type of telework, whether the employee teleworks regularly or not. The agreement provides the framework for the discussion that needs to take place

between the supervisor and the employee about work expectations and operational procedures. The parameters of telework agreements are laid out by the agency policy and/or collective bargaining agreement and typically address the days and time the employee is regularly scheduled to telework or may work on an intermittent or situational (ad hoc) basis, as applicable. In addition, agencies must provide interactive training to ensure that employees and supervisors have the skills to engage effectively in telework.

Communication of Expectations for Unscheduled Telework

Agency telework policies and telework agreements should specify whether employees are expected or permitted to work from home during emergency situations on days that they are not regularly scheduled to telework. OPM strongly encourages agencies to permit telework-ready employees to use unscheduled telework on any day OPM makes an unscheduled telework announcement. The written telework agreement should specifically address telework expectations when the Federal Government announces (1) unscheduled leave/unscheduled telework, (2) delayed arrival, or (3) Federal offices are closed to the public. In addition, employees who are already performing unscheduled telework should know what is expected of them when OPM announces an early or immediate departure after the workday has begun.

Ensure Employees Are Telework-Ready

OPM strongly encourages agencies to continue reviewing their current telework arrangements and establish agreements with all employees who are scheduled or eligible to telework (i.e., telework-ready) at any time during the year. Special attention should be paid to employees who will telework only on an occasional, situational (ad hoc) basis so that they are prepared to telework during events or circumstances that disrupt or prevent commuting or reporting to the office. The key to the successful use of situational (ad hoc) telework is an effective, routine telework program. Snow emergencies, for example, may be rare events, but to operate as intended, telework-ready employees should regularly practice teleworking.

No Coercion

Employee participation in the telework program is voluntary. An agency may not compel an employee to participate in telework, even if the duties of the position make that employee “telework eligible.” Therefore, an agency should never force an employee (who either does not wish to telework or is not eligible to telework) to sign a telework agreement to avoid providing excused absence to that employee on a day when Federal offices are closed to the public. Both employee participation and the signing of a telework agreement must be voluntary.

II. Changes in OPM Announcements and Guidance

In response to questions, comments, and concerns, OPM is altering its announcements and guidance to more effectively assist agencies and employees during emergency situations. OPM consulted with the Chief Human Capital Officers (CHCO) Council and formed a working group of agency human resources specialists to develop new announcements and policies. OPM also coordinated with Federal, State, and local

emergency management and transportation officials. The following summarizes the improvements that have been made to OPM’s operating procedures.

A. Agency-Specific Emergencies

When an emergency is specific to one agency or there is imminent danger and immediate action is required, an agency should take appropriate action for its employees without depending on an OPM announcement—e.g., power outage, loss of water, gas leak, damage from the aftermath of an earthquake. OPM believes that agencies are in the best position to determine the appropriate course of action. Each agency’s actions should be consistent with OPM’s guidance and take into account the provisions of applicable agreements, telework policies and agreements, or other controlling policies, authorities, and instructions.

Each agency should have a method for communicating and updating operating status announcements to employees as part of the agency’s emergency procedures. These methods of communication could include agency website notices, emergency call-in phone numbers, phone trees, automated emails, media announcements, etc. To the extent possible, each agency should notify OPM’s Office of Communications and Public Liaison and the CHCO Executive Director of any agency-specific closure or dismissals.

B. New OPM Operating Status Announcements to Improve Emergency Tool Kit

When OPM makes announcements for Federal dismissals and closures in the Washington, DC, area, the nature and timing of the events, as well as their impact on traffic, may vary considerably. The following changes have been made to OPM’s operating status announcements.

Early Departure

OPM is amending its current early departure announcement and adding two new early departure announcements. The expansion of the early departure announcements more accurately reflects the types of emergency situations that take place after the workday has begun. These announcements will be used depending on the specific circumstances surrounding the emergency, and like the new SIP announcement, they are intended to make the *Washington, DC, Dismissal and Closure Procedures* a more comprehensive emergency guide.

OPM Announcement: “Open – XX Hour(s) Staggered Early Departure”

The current announcement is a staggered early departure. This announcement will be used when it is determined that for the safety of Federal employees and the general public, employees should depart XX hour(s) earlier than their normal departure time and may request unscheduled leave if they wish to depart prior to their staggered departure time. This is a change from last year’s announcement because unscheduled telework is no longer an option for early departures. OPM believes it is more effective to announce “unscheduled leave/unscheduled telework” at the beginning of the work day when severe weather is expected during the workday. A staggered departure reduces the number of Federal employees commuting during the day and helps avoid traffic gridlock. The

announcement still uses staggered departure times depending on each employee's work schedule. Employees who leave the office at their staggered departure time will be granted excused absence for the time period after their departure. To support the orderly dismissal of employees and to minimize the disruption of highway and mass transit systems, employees who depart prior to their staggered departure times must take unscheduled leave and will not be granted excused absence. Agencies may grant excused absence to employees who need to depart prior to their staggered departure times for personal hardship reasons on a case-by-case basis.

OPM Announcement: "Open – XX Hour(s) Staggered Early Departure – Employees Must Depart No Later Than XX: XX at Which Time Federal Offices Are Closed to the Public."

The first new announcement is a staggered, early departure **with a final departure time** for Federal employees. This announcement will be used when it is determined that for the safety of Federal employees and the general public, employees must be out of their offices by a specific time. The announcement still uses staggered departure times measured from employees' normal departure times. At the final departure time, remaining Federal employees would be dismissed. For example, if a snowstorm begins during the workday and is expected to intensify and reach critical mass late in the afternoon, OPM would announce a staggered early departure with a final departure time to help ensure that all Federal employees are safe at home during the most intense part of the snowstorm.

OPM Announcement: "Immediate Departure – Federal Offices Are Closed to the Public."

The second new announcement is immediate departure. This means that all Federal employees, except emergency employees, should depart from their offices immediately. OPM anticipates that this announcement would be issued only as a last resort in extremely rare circumstances, if ever, and only after all other avenues of response have been considered or already implemented but deemed to be no longer appropriate. Immediate departure might be issued when circumstances beyond our control change dramatically and our original announcement – staggered early departure with a final departure time no later than XX: XX – is determined to no longer be a safe plan to address the emergency. The intent of this announcement is to sanction the evacuation of Federal employees from their offices for their own safety as well as communicate to agencies, employees, and the public that Federal offices are closed as of the time of the announcement. Immediate departure is never the preferred option, but in extremely rare circumstances, it may be the only viable option, and might be issued in recognition of the fact that most agencies, facing the same circumstances, will have already dismissed their employees using their agency-specific authority. As with all other announcements, OPM will endeavor to provide as much warning as possible to agencies, employees, and regional government and transportation authorities.

Shelter-In-Place

OPM is introducing a Shelter-In-Place (SIP) operating status announcement as an additional tool to help protect the Federal workforce during certain severe weather events

(e.g., tornadoes) or emergencies, such as danger from exposure to outside contaminants in the event of a release into the atmosphere of hazardous materials such as radiological, biological, or chemical contaminants.

OPM Announcement: “**Shelter-In-Place**”

OPM’s new SIP announcement is intended to make the *Washington, DC, Dismissal and Closure Procedures* a more comprehensive emergency guide, but it is not intended to supersede any agency-specific SIP plans or announcements. OPM wants to institutionalize the announcement as part of our emergency planning and operating procedures for dealing with emergencies. This announcement would be issued only in extreme circumstances and would communicate to agencies, employees, and the public that Federal offices are temporarily closed. An SIP announcement would be issued solely for the safety of the Federal workforce. Additionally, OPM’s SIP announcement can be used as a template for general discussions on emergency planning and operations. Specific information on this announcement can be found in Section IV.

C. Appropriate Use of Unscheduled Leave and Unscheduled Telework

Questions arise regarding whether “telework-ready” employees must request to perform unscheduled telework when the option is made available prior to the beginning of the workday. With regard to unscheduled leave, are the procedures different for announcements that are made prior to the start of the workday versus announcements that are made after the workday has begun? In addition, are employees who request unscheduled telework required to work the entire day? The answers to these questions will depend on the type of emergency and OPM announcement, as reflected below.

Announcement for Unscheduled Leave or Unscheduled Telework (Prior to the Beginning of the Workday)

This announcement will be used when it is determined prior to the beginning of the workday to be in the best interest of the Federal Government and the general public for non-emergency Federal employees to have the opportunity to take unscheduled leave or unscheduled telework to promote continuity of operations and maintain the safety of employees and the general public. When this announcement is made alone or with a delayed arrival, OPM strongly encourages agencies to allow each employee the option to perform unscheduled telework (if telework-ready) or take unscheduled leave without further permission, and as provided under his or her agency’s policies, procedures, and subject to any applicable collective bargaining requirements, and as defined in his or her telework agreement. Employees electing the unscheduled telework option must have an adequate amount of work to perform during the entire workday. In either situation, the employee is obligated to notify his or her supervisor of the intent to perform unscheduled telework or take unscheduled leave. A telework- ready employee who performs unscheduled telework must work the entire workday or account for his or her time by requesting leave.

OPM advises agencies to establish clear procedures in advance for the use of unscheduled telework so that both supervisors and employees can respond quickly to OPM announcements without need for additional approvals on the day of the

announcement. Executive agencies inside the Washington Capital Beltway have agreed to follow OPM's announcements, and employees must follow these announcements to achieve the desired effects.

Announcements for Early Departure with Staggered and Final Departure Times (After the Workday Has Begun)

The early departure announcements with staggered and final departure times are used when Federal employees are dismissed from the office after the workday has begun. When this announcement is made, employees must be permitted to depart promptly at their designated staggered departure times and should stay no later than the final departure time announced by OPM. For an employee who wishes to depart prior to his or her staggered departure time, the employee may request unscheduled leave, and will be required to take leave for the remainder of his or her workday, without any excused absence (administrative leave); however unscheduled telework is no longer an option. Only those employees who stay at the office until their staggered departure time should be granted excused absence (administrative leave).

OPM strongly encourages agencies to establish clear procedures for early dismissal so that both supervisors and employees can respond quickly to the announcement for safety purposes. Executive agencies inside the Washington Capital Beltway have agreed to follow OPM's announcement, and these announcements must be followed to achieve the desired result.

III. Requirements for Emergency and Telework-Ready Employees

Emergency Employees

As the President's advisor on human resources policies, OPM advises agencies to designate in advance those emergency employees who are critical to agency operations (including security and infrastructure) in dismissal or closure situations and who will be expected to work. Because of the diversity in agency missions and employee occupations/skills, the variable nature of the emergencies, weather and geographic conditions specific to duty locations, and many other factors, OPM does not provide standard Governmentwide definitions of emergency employees. Each agency is in the best position and is responsible for determining its own needs. Agency heads (or their designees, as applicable) are responsible for making 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 and may include any employees who are part of an agency's emergency response plans and COOP plans. Such designations should be communicated to the affected employees at least annually (preferably in writing and well in advance) so employees can be prepared to support and sustain agency operations.

Emergency employees are expected to report to or remain at their worksite in dismissal or closure situations unless otherwise directed by their agencies. In rare events, an agency may determine that circumstances justify granting excused absence to an emergency employee. An agency may grant a reasonable amount of excused absence to an emergency employee who is unable to report for work or faces a personal hardship. For

example, factors such as distance, availability of public transportation, available alternatives to childcare or eldercare, or health/medical limitations may be considered. When Government operations are disrupted and offices are closed to the public for an extended period of time, an agency may determine that changing circumstances require non-emergency employees to report for work. Consequently, each agency should establish a procedure for notifying and recalling these employees. OPM advises agencies to identify non-emergency employees who are expected to remain in contact with their agencies at all times during dismissal or closure situations to maintain continuity readiness. Such employees may be called to work during emergencies dealing with national security, extended emergencies, or other unique situations. Agencies should anticipate the emergency situations in which such employees will be expected to report for work at a regular worksite or alternative worksite and the circumstances under which they will be permitted to telework, if they prefer, and should notify affected employees of this policy. Agencies may issue communications devices and other equipment to these employees to facilitate contact in emergency situations.

Telework-Ready Employees

The Act requires agencies to integrate telework into their COOP plans. OPM advises agencies to make telework arrangements a standard part of all agency emergency planning to ensure the Federal Government is well positioned to carry out its essential functions for continuity of operations. Employees' telework agreements should spell out whether the employees are expected to work from home or an alternative site on days that they are regularly scheduled to telework when the Federal Government has announced a change in the operating status for the Washington, DC, area. OPM strongly encourages agencies to permit telework-ready employees to use unscheduled telework on any day OPM makes an unscheduled telework announcement prior to the beginning of the workday. OPM also advises agencies to review their current telework policies regularly and establish policies regarding when telework-ready employees may be required to work under these dismissal and closure procedures.

As permitted by their agency's policies, procedures, and subject to any applicable collective bargaining requirements, non-emergency telework-ready employees must notify their supervisor of their intent to use unscheduled leave or unscheduled telework, as appropriate. When OPM announces an early departure, employees who are already performing telework for the day may request appropriate leave, earned compensatory time off, credit hours (if permitted), or reschedule their flexible work schedule day off when additional time off is needed. Agencies may also consider exercising their authority to grant excused absence to telework employees on a case-by-case basis (e.g., for electricity/infrastructure/connectivity issues, childcare or eldercare issues) on days when they are otherwise required to telework when Federal offices are closed to the public.

Further, under OPM's policy for unscheduled telework, agencies have the opportunity to increase the use of telework during emergency situations, but must provide for this in their telework policies and invite employees to enter into telework arrangements in order to support this opportunity. OPM encourages agencies to modify, or consider renegotiating, current telework policies to require all telework-ready employees to work on a day when OPM announces prior to the beginning of the workday that Federal offices

are closed to the public. This change in work expectations may be subject to any applicable collective bargaining requirements and should be included explicitly in the agency's telework policy and must be reflected in the employee's written telework agreement.

OPM strongly encourages agencies to maintain a viable telework-ready workforce. This requires encouraging employees to enter into telework agreements, communicating expectations before an emergency situation occurs, and practicing and testing equipment and procedures regularly throughout the year, not just teleworking during emergencies that may occur only infrequently over time (i.e., "blue moon" emergencies). Thus, all telework-ready employees should have the opportunity or be required to telework regularly to ensure that they will be able to function effectively and efficiently on a day when Federal offices are closed to the public in the Washington, DC, area.

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

Employees who are required to work on site (e.g., at the office) or telework during their regular tour of duty on a day when Federal offices are closed to the public (or when other employees are authorized a delayed arrival or an early departure) are not entitled to receive overtime pay, credit hours, or compensatory time off for performing work during their regularly scheduled non-overtime hours.

Failure to Work

An emergency employee is required to work on a day when Federal offices are closed to the public (or when OPM has authorized a delayed arrival or an early or immediate departure), and for such an employee, the day is a workday and normal time and attendance rules apply.

A telework-ready employee may be required to work (based on agency policies and individual telework agreements, which may be subject to any applicable collective bargaining requirements) on a day when Federal offices are closed to the public (or when employees working at the office receive either a delayed arrival or an early departure announcement), and for such an employee, the day is a workday and normal time and attendance rules apply.

However in unique situations, an agency may determine that circumstances justify granting excused absence to an emergency employee or a telework-ready employee (required to work based on agency policies and telework agreements, which may be subject to any applicable collective bargaining requirements), and such an employee may be granted excused absence (administrative leave) by the agency. This could occur, for instance, if weather conditions make it impracticable or dangerous for an emergency employee to travel to the worksite, or if power outages or network connection problems prevent telework.

If an employee who is required to work fails to report for work without adequate reason for his or her absence, the agency may place the employee on absence without leave (AWOL), and the employee may potentially be disciplined for AWOL by the agency.

Each agency is responsible for determining whether the employee has adequate reasons for his or her absence.

Employees who are not designated as emergency employees or not required to telework should be granted excused absence when their office is closed to the public and they are prevented from working due to the emergency. However, excused absence should not be granted to employees on (1) leave without pay, (2) official travel, or (3) a flexible or compressed work schedule day off.

IV. OPM Guidance on Dismissal and Closure Procedures

The *Washington, DC, Area Dismissal and Closure Procedures* uses the following announcements:

A. OPM Announcement: OPEN

What OPM Announcement Means: “Federal agencies in the Washington, DC, area are **OPEN**. Employees are expected to report to their worksite or begin telework on time.”

Normal operating procedures are in effect. Employees account for their hours of work by **WATS**:

- Working at a worksite (typically the office) in the DC area,
- Alternative work schedules (AWS) day off,
- Teleworking, or
- Scheduled leave or other paid time off.

B. OPM Announcement: OPEN WITH OPTION FOR UNSCHEDULED LEAVE OR UNSCHEDULED TELEWORK

What OPM Announcement Means: “Federal agencies in the Washington, DC, area are **OPEN** and employees have the **OPTION** for **UNSCHEDULED LEAVE OR UNSCHEDULED TELEWORK**.”

Non-Emergency Employees. Non-emergency employees must notify their supervisors of their intent to use unscheduled leave or unscheduled telework (if telework-ready). Non-emergency employees have the option to (1) use earned annual leave, compensatory time off, credit hours, or sick leave, as appropriate; (2) use leave without pay; or (3) request to use their flexible work schedule day off or rearrange their work hours under flexible work schedules.

Telework-Ready Employees. Telework-ready employees who are regularly scheduled to perform telework or who notify their supervisor of their intention to perform unscheduled telework must be prepared to telework for the entire workday, or take unscheduled leave, or a combination of both for the entire workday, in accordance with their agency’s policies and procedures, subject to any applicable collective bargaining requirements.

Emergency Employees. Emergency employees are expected to report to their worksites on time unless otherwise directed by their agencies.

C. OPM Announcement: OPEN – XX HOUR(S) DELAYED ARRIVAL – WITH OPTION FOR UNSCHEDULED LEAVE OR UNSCHEDULED TELEWORK

What OPM Announcement Means: “Federal agencies in the Washington, DC, area are **OPEN** under **XX HOUR(S) DELAYED ARRIVAL** and employees have the **OPTION FOR UNSCHEDULED LEAVE OR UNSCHEDULED TELEWORK.**”

Delayed Arrival. Non-emergency employees should plan their commute so the arrival for work is no more than XX hour(s) later than the employees’ normal arrival time. For example, if OPM announces a 2-hour delayed arrival policy, employees who normally would arrive at 8:00 a.m. should arrive for work no later than 10:00 a.m. Such employees will be granted excused absence (administrative leave) for up to the designated number of hours past their normal arrival time.

Non-Emergency Employees. Non-emergency employees must notify their supervisors of their intent to use unscheduled leave or unscheduled telework. Non-emergency employees have the option to (1) use earned annual leave, compensatory time off, credit hours, or sick leave, as appropriate; (2) use leave without pay; or (3) request to use their flexible work schedule day off or rearrange their work hours under flexible work schedules.

Telework-Ready Employees. Telework-ready employees who are regularly scheduled to perform telework or who notify their supervisors of their intention to perform unscheduled telework must be prepared to telework the entire workday or, take unscheduled leave, or a combination of both, for the entire workday in accordance with their agency’s policies and procedures, subject to any applicable collective bargaining requirements.

Emergency Employees. Emergency employees are expected to report to their worksites on time unless otherwise directed by their agencies.

Flexible Work Schedules. For employees under flexible work schedules, agencies should consult OPM’s *Handbook on Alternative Work Schedules* (see information on “Excused Absence” in the “Flexible Work Schedules” section) to determine the “normal arrival and departure times” of employees on flexible schedules. The handbook is available on OPM’s website at <http://www.opm.gov/oca/aws/index.htm>.

Pre-approved Leave. Employees on pre-approved leave for the entire workday or employees who have notified their supervisors of their intent to use unscheduled leave when a delayed arrival is announced should be charged leave for the entire workday. Such employees should not be granted excused absence.

Personal Hardship. An agency may grant excused absence to employees who arrived later than their expected arrival time, if delayed for personal hardship reasons. For example, if OPM announces a 2-hour delayed arrival policy, and employees arrive for work 3 hours later than their expected arrival times, the employees should be charged 1 hour of leave. However, in the case of unique circumstances or hardships, agencies may determine to grant excused absence for the excess time.

D. OPM Announcement: OPEN - XX HOUR(S) STAGGERED EARLY DEPARTURE

What OPM Announcement Means: “Federal agencies in the Washington, DC, area are **OPEN**. Employees should depart **XX HOUR(S)** earlier than their normal departure times from the office and may request **UNSCHEDULED LEAVE** to depart prior to their staggered departure times.”

Early Departure Time. Non-emergency employees will be dismissed from their office early relative to their scheduled departure times and will be granted excused absence (administrative leave) for the number of hours remaining in their workday beyond their early departure time. For example, if a 3-hour staggered early departure is announced, employees who work 8:30 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. would be expected to depart at 2:00 p.m. (i.e., the employees’ staggered departure time).

Telework-Ready Employees. Telework-ready employees performing telework must continue to telework or take unscheduled leave, or a combination of both for the entire workday in accordance with their agency’s policies and procedures, subject to any applicable collective bargaining requirements.

Departure Prior to Early Dismissal Time. Non-emergency employees who wish to depart prior to their staggered early departure time may request to use unscheduled leave. Such employees will be charged leave for the remainder of their workday and will not be granted excused absence.

Emergency Employees. Emergency employees are expected to remain at their worksites unless otherwise directed by their agencies.

Flexible Work Schedules. For employees under flexible work schedules, agencies should consult OPM’s *Handbook on Alternative Work Schedules* (see information on “Excused Absence” in the “Flexible Work Schedules” section) to determine the “normal arrival and departure times” of employees on flexible schedules. The handbook is available on OPM’s website at <http://www.opm.gov/oca/aws/index.htm>.

Pre-approved leave. Employees on pre-approved leave for the entire workday or employees who have requested unscheduled leave before an early departure policy is announced should continue to be charged leave for the entire workday or remainder of the workday, as applicable. Employees who are not affected by the emergency (i.e. not prevented from working) should not be granted excused absence (administrative leave).

- If employees are on leave and are not scheduled to return on that day, the employees are not prevented from working by the emergency and should continue to be charged leave.
- If employees on leave who are scheduled to return to work after the applicable staggered departure time, the employees should be granted excused absence starting from the time he or she was scheduled to return from leave.

- If employees have pre-approved leave commencing after their staggered departure times (e.g., for a medical appointment), an agency may consider granting excused absence.

Personal hardships. Agencies may grant excused absence to permit employees to depart early to avoid personal hardships (e.g., when there is no available public transportation or no alternative forms of child/elder care, or the employee has health/medical limitations). However, agencies should bear in mind that the purpose of the early departure policy is to allow an orderly staggered release of Federal employees in the Washington, DC, area so as to avoid traffic gridlock and overcrowding of the public transit systems and to facilitate snow removal and operational capabilities of emergency first responders.

Employees who telework from remote locations. Employees who telework from remote locations may be required to work during any closure of their agency's home office, as provided in the employees' telework agreements, consistent with their agency's policies, procedures, and any applicable collective bargaining requirements. If Federal offices in the geographic area of their remote location announce an early departure (e.g., a snow emergency), such employees should follow the requirements of their telework agreement, consistent with their agency's policies, procedures, and any applicable collective bargaining requirements, or contact their supervisor for further information and instructions.

Employees on official travel. If non-emergency employees are on official travel on a workday when their agency offices are closed to the public in the Washington, DC, area, employees are expected to continue working. However, if the emergency procedures of the agency make it impossible for the employees to continue work – e.g., the travel assignment requires frequent contact with the agency in the Washington, DC, area – excused absence may be appropriate. Agencies are responsible for determining whether employees are required to continue working or will be granted excused absence under these circumstances.

E. OPM Announcement: OPEN - XX HOUR(S) STAGGERED EARLY DEPARTURE – EMPLOYEES MUST DEPART NO LATER THAN XX: XX AT WHICH TIME FEDERAL OFFICES ARE CLOSED TO THE PUBLIC.

What OPM Announcement Means: “Federal agencies in the Washington, DC, area are **OPEN**. Employees should depart **XX HOUR(S)** earlier than their normal departure times and may request **UNSCHEDULED LEAVE** to depart prior to their staggered departure times. Employees **MUST DEPART** at no later than **XX: XX** at which time **FEDERAL OFFICES** in the Washington, DC, area are **CLOSED TO THE PUBLIC.**”

Early Departure Time. Non-emergency employees will be dismissed relative to their normal departure times and will be granted excused absence (administrative leave) for the number of hours remaining in their workdays beyond their staggered departure time. All remaining non-emergency employees whose staggered departure times are later than the final departure time should depart from their offices at the final departure time. All employees who depart at the final departure time will be granted excused absence (administrative leave) for the number of hours remaining in their workday, even if more

than the XX hour(s) provided in the OPM announcement. For example, if a 3-hour staggered emergency early dismissal is announced with a final departure time at 2:00 p.m., and an employee works 7:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., the employee should leave at 12:30 p.m. (i.e., the employee's early departure time). However, if an employee works 9:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., the employee should depart at 2:00 p.m. (the final departure time) instead of the employee's staggered departure time at 3:00 p.m. In this case, the employee would receive 4 hours of excused absence (i.e., 2:00 to 6:00 p.m.).

Telework-Ready Employees. Telework-ready employees performing telework must continue to telework or take unscheduled leave, or a combination of both for the entire workday in accordance with their agency's policies and procedures, subject to any applicable collective bargaining requirements.

Departure Prior to Early Dismissal Time. Non-emergency employees who depart prior to their staggered early departure time or final departure time may request to use unscheduled leave. Such employees will be charged leave for the remainder of their workday and will not be granted excused absence.

Emergency Employees. Emergency employees are expected to remain at their worksite unless otherwise directed by their agencies.

Flexible Work Schedules. For employees under flexible work schedules, agencies should consult OPM's *Handbook on Alternative Work Schedules* (see information on "Excused Absence" in the "Flexible Work Schedules" section) to determine the "normal arrival and departure times" of employees on flexible schedules. The handbook is available on OPM's website at <http://www.opm.gov/oca/aws/index.htm>.

Pre-approved leave. Employees on pre-approved leave for the entire workday or employees who have requested unscheduled leave before an early departure policy is announced should continue to be charged leave for the entire workday or the remainder of the workday, as applicable. Employees who are not affected by the emergency (prevented from working) should not be granted excused absence (administrative leave).

- If employees are on leave and are not scheduled to return on that day, the employees are not prevented from working by the emergency and should continue to be charged leave.
- If employees on leave who are scheduled to return to work after the staggered departure or final departure time, as applicable, the employees should be granted excused absence starting from the time he or she was scheduled to return from leave.
- If employees have pre-approved leave commencing after their staggered departure times (e.g., for a medical appointment), an agency may consider granting excused absence.

Personal hardships. Agencies may grant excused absence to permit employees to depart early to avoid personal hardships (e.g., when there is no available public transportation or alternative forms of child/elder care, or the employee has health/medical limitations). However, agencies should bear in mind that the purpose of the early departure policy is to allow an orderly staggered release of Federal employees in the Washington, DC, area so

as to avoid traffic gridlock and overcrowding of the public transit systems, and to facilitate snow removal and operational capabilities of emergency first responders.

Employees who telework from remote locations. Employees who telework from remote locations may be required to work during any closure of their agency's home office, as provided in the employees' telework agreements, consistent with their agency's policies, procedures, and any applicable collective bargaining requirements agreements. If Federal offices in the geographic area of their remote location announce an early departure (e.g., a snow emergency), such employees should follow the requirements of their telework agreement, consistent with their agency's policies, procedures, and any applicable collective bargaining requirements agreements, or contact their supervisor for further information and instructions.

Employees on official travel. If non-emergency employees are on official travel on a workday when their agency offices are closed to the public in the Washington, DC, area, employees are expected to continue working. However, if the emergency procedures of the agency make it impossible for the employees to continue work – e.g., the travel assignment requires frequent contact with the agency in the Washington, DC, area – excused absence may be appropriate. Agencies are responsible for determining whether employees are required to continue working or will be granted excused absence under these circumstances.

F. OPM Announcement: IMMEDIATE DEPARTURE—FEDERAL OFFICES ARE CLOSED TO THE PUBLIC

What OPM Announcement Means: “**IMMEDIATE DEPARTURE.** Employees should depart **IMMEDIATELY. FEDERAL OFFICES** in the Washington, DC, area are **CLOSED TO THE PUBLIC.**”

Immediate Departure. Non-emergency employees should depart immediately from their offices. All non-emergency employees will be granted excused absence (administrative leave) for the number of hours remaining in their workday. For example, if OPM announces an immediate departure at 12:00 p.m., all non-emergency employees will be granted excused absence (administrative leave) for the number of hours remaining in their scheduled workday unless covered by one of the exceptions listed below.

Emergency Employees. Emergency employees are expected to remain at their worksites unless otherwise directed by their agencies.

Exceptions

Employees who leave before an immediate departure policy is announced. Employees who depart before an immediate departure policy is announced should be charged annual leave or leave without pay beginning at the time the employees left work and for the remainder of their scheduled workday.

Employees scheduled to return to work. If employees are scheduled to return from leave after an immediate departure is announced, the agency should charge leave for the period prior to the immediate departure time and grant excused absence for the remainder of the workday following the immediate departure time.

Telework-Ready Employees. Telework-ready employees performing telework must continue to telework for the entire workday or take unscheduled leave for the remainder of the workday, as applicable in accordance with their agencies' policies and procedures, subject to any applicable collective bargaining requirements.

Employees who telework from remote locations. Employees who telework from remote locations may be required to work during any closure of their agency's home office, as provided in the employees' telework agreements, consistent with their agency's policies, procedures, and any applicable collective bargaining requirements. If Federal offices in the geographic area of their remote location are closed to the public (e.g., a snow emergency), such employees should follow the requirements of their telework agreement, consistent with their agency's policies, procedures, and any applicable collective bargaining requirements, or contact their supervisor for further information and instructions.

Employees on official travel. If non-emergency employees are on official travel on a workday when their agency offices are closed to the public in the Washington, DC, area, employees are expected to continue working. However, if the emergency procedures of the agency make it impossible for the employees to continue work – e.g., the travel assignment requires frequent contact with the agency in the Washington, DC, area – excused absence may be appropriate. The agency is responsible for determining whether employees are required to continue working or will be granted excused absence under these circumstances.

Employees on an alternative work schedule (AWS) day off. If Federal offices are closed to the public on the employees' regular AWS day off, they are not entitled to an additional "in lieu of" day off. AWS employees who fulfill their biweekly work requirement in less than 10 working days are already entitled to an AWS day off. Such employees may not receive an additional day off. In addition, employees cannot be granted excused absence on a nonworkday. AWS employees whose agency's offices are closed to the public on their AWS day off may not be granted excused absence for the scheduled nonworkday.

G. OPM Announcement: FEDERAL OFFICES ARE CLOSED TO THE PUBLIC.

What OPM Announcement Means: "FEDERAL OFFICES in the Washington, DC, area are **CLOSED TO THE PUBLIC.**"

Closed to Public. Non-emergency employees (including employees on pre-approved paid leave) will be granted excused absence (administrative leave) for the number of hours they were scheduled to work unless covered by one of the exceptions listed below.

Emergency employees. Emergency employees are expected to report for work on time unless otherwise directed by their agencies.

Exceptions

Telework-Ready Employees. Telework-ready employees who are scheduled to perform telework on the day of the announcement or who are required to perform unscheduled telework on a day when Federal offices are closed to the public must telework the entire workday or request leave, or a combination of both, in accordance with their agencies' policies and procedures, subject to any applicable collective bargaining requirements.

Employees on leave without pay. Employees on leave without pay, leave without pay for military duty, workers' compensation, suspension, or in another nonpay status are not granted excused absence when Federal offices are closed to the public. These employees should remain in their current status. Employees in a nonpay status have no expectation of working and receiving pay for a day during which Federal offices are closed to the public and therefore will not be granted excused absence.

Employees who telework from remote locations. Employees who telework from remote locations may be required to work during any closure of their agency's home office, as provided in the employees' telework agreements, consistent with their agency's policies, procedures, and any applicable collective bargaining requirements. If Federal offices in the geographic area of their remote location are closed to the public (e.g., a snow emergency), such employees should follow the requirements of their telework agreement, consistent with their agency's policies, procedures, and any applicable collective bargaining requirements, or contact their supervisor for further information and instructions.

Employees on official travel. If non-emergency employees are on official travel on a workday when their agency offices are closed to the public in the Washington, DC, area, employees are expected to continue working. However, if the emergency procedures of the agency make it impossible for the employees to continue work – e.g., the travel assignment requires frequent contact with the agency in the Washington, DC, area – excused absence may be appropriate. The agency is responsible for determining whether employees are required to continue working or will be granted excused absence under these circumstances.

Employees on an alternative work schedule (AWS) day off. If Federal offices are closed to the public on the employees' regular AWS day off, they are not entitled to an additional "in lieu of" day off. AWS employees who fulfill their biweekly work requirement in less than 10 working days are already entitled to an AWS day off. Such employees may not receive an additional day off. In addition, employees cannot be granted excused absence on a nonworkday. AWS employees whose agency's offices are closed to the public on their AWS day off may not be granted excused absence for the scheduled nonworkday.

H. OPM Announcement: SHELTER-IN-PLACE

What OPM Announcement Means: "FEDERAL OFFICES in the Washington, DC, area are under SHELTER-IN-PLACE procedures and are CLOSED TO THE PUBLIC."

General Description. Shelter-in-place (SIP) procedures are conducted when employees (and visitors) must remain in the office or take immediate shelter in a readily accessible interior location to protect themselves. An SIP may be needed for a variety of reasons, which could include severe weather (e.g., tornadoes) or danger from exposure to outside contaminants in the event of a release into the atmosphere of hazardous materials such as radiological, biological, or chemical contaminants. A shelter-in-place announcement could be used in conjunction with other OPM operations status announcements for the Washington, DC, area. It is anticipated that an OPM shelter-in-place announcement for the Washington, DC, area would be extremely rare and likely would be in effect for a relatively short period of time. OPM's announcement is not intended to supersede any agency-specific SIP plans or procedures, and agencies retain the authority to act on their own without an OPM SIP announcement as circumstances dictate.

Employees Located at Agency Worksites. All employees should follow their agency's emergency procedure for shelter-in-place announcements. Employees should remain in their designated safe area until they are notified by agency officials that they may return to their offices or leave their worksites.

Employees Prevented from Entering Agency Worksites. Employees who are unable to enter their buildings due to shelter-in-place procedures should be granted excused absence (administrative leave) for the duration of the announcement.

Telework-Ready Employees. Telework-ready employees performing telework are expected to continue working during the shelter-in-place, unless affected by the emergency or otherwise notified by their agencies.

V. OPM and Agency Responsibilities

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 (WMATA). OPM officials will consult with various officials, including appropriate Federal, DC government, municipal, and regional officials before the Director makes operating status announcements.
2. The Director of OPM will make a decision on the status of Federal operations. This decision will be based on the need to keep Federal operations functioning as normally as possible with our concern for the safety of Federal employees.
3. OPM will notify agency CHCOs and Human Resources Directors of any decision to announce unscheduled leave/unscheduled telework, a delayed arrival, early departure, immediate departure, shelter in place, or Federal offices are closed to the public. Information will be available at <http://www.opm.gov/status/index.aspx> or by phone at (202) 606-1900.

Agencies' Responsibilities

1. Agencies should establish policies and procedures to be consistent with and implement OPM's *Washington, DC, Area Dismissal and Closure Procedures*. This includes revising and updating employees' written telework agreements and incorporation of such agreements into emergency planning, including updating internal agency announcements based on OPM's latest changes.
2. Agencies should develop explicit procedures in advance that employees may use during emergencies to notify their supervisors promptly of their intent to use unscheduled leave or perform unscheduled telework (if telework-ready) prior to the start of the workday or as soon as practicable. Agencies should also develop similar procedures for employees to request unscheduled leave when OPM announces an early departure with either a staggered or final departure time or an immediate departure after the workday has already begun.
3. At least annually, agencies should identify emergency employees (including COOP employees) and notify them in writing. The written notice should include the requirement that emergency employees report for work or remain at work (or work at home or report to an alternative worksite) when Government operations are disrupted and an explanation that announcements of unscheduled leave/unscheduled telework, delayed arrival, early or immediate departure, or Federal offices are closed to the public in the Washington, DC, area do not apply to them unless they are instructed otherwise. For telework-ready employees, requirements should be explicit in the telework agreements. If an agency determines that certain circumstances may require non-emergency employees to report for work or remain at work when Government operations are disrupted, the agency should establish a procedure for notifying them individually.
4. To implement and/or maintain telework readiness, agencies should continue to (1) review their current telework policies to ensure that telework is integrated as part of the flexibilities permitted during disruption of normal operating procedures; (2) ensure that the IT infrastructure is in place to allow large numbers of employees to telework simultaneously; (3) establish new situational (ad-hoc) telework arrangements for employees who can telework, and wish to do so on a situational (ad hoc) basis, but typically do not; and (4) permit or require all employees who can telework, and wish to do so on at least a situational (ad hoc) basis, to practice it regularly and frequently to maintain effectiveness and ensure functionality.
5. OPM urges agencies to expand their policies, procedures, and telework agreements, subject to any applicable collective bargaining requirements, as applicable, so that when OPM announces that Federal offices in the Washington, DC, area are closed to the public, employees with telework agreements will be expected to work on those days rather than be granted excused absence (administrative leave). Agencies and employees should take into account the quid-pro-quo benefits of telework. That is, telework is an option to maintain work productivity without compromising employee safety, and telework is an option available all year long to help employees balance personal and work needs.

6. Agencies must establish policies for the use of unscheduled telework. Using telework as an option when unscheduled leave/unscheduled telework or delayed arrival announcements are made will likely be more frequent than when announcements are made to close Federal offices to the public. For the majority of OPM's announcements, it is expected that telework will be an available flexibility to allow telework-ready employees to avoid lengthy commutes or use leave unnecessarily.
7. For employees who are expected to telework when Federal offices are closed to the public, it is imperative that they have the opportunity to telework on a regular basis to ensure that they will be able to function effectively and efficiently.
8. Agencies must notify employees that if they are required to report for work and fail to do so, they will be charged absence without leave (AWOL) for the period not worked and may potentially be disciplined for AWOL upon further determination by the agency. (See Failure to Report for Work.) In unique situations, an agency may determine that circumstances justify excusing emergency employees or non-emergency employees from duty, and they may be granted excused absence administrative leave).
9. Agencies are responsible for determining dismissal policies, emergency procedures, 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. Agencies should consult OPM's *Handbook on Alternative Work Schedules* (see information on "Excused Absence" in the "Flexible Work Schedules" section) to determine the "normal arrival and departure times" of employees on flexible schedules. The handbook is available on OPM's website at <http://www.opm.gov/oca/aws/index.htm>
10. Agencies should have shelter-in-place plans developed to use during certain emergencies. These plans should be communicated clearly to their employees and tested periodically.
11. During an agency-specific closure or dismissal, agencies should have their own methods for communicating and updating their status of operations to employees. These methods could include agency website notices, emergency call-in phone numbers, phone trees, automated emails, media announcements, etc. To the extent possible, each agency should notify OPM's Office of Communications and Public Liaison and the CHCO Executive Director of any agency-specific closure or dismissal.

VI. Additional Resources for Emergency Guidance

In any emergency situation, Government operations may be disrupted for extended periods. OPM has provided numerous resources to enable Federal agencies to continue functioning effectively during an emergency situation. This information is available at <http://www.opm.gov/emergency>. In addition, the following information, available on OPM's website, offers further guidance on continuing operations during extended emergencies:

Handbook on Pay and Leave Benefits for Federal Employees Affected by Severe Weather Emergencies or Other Emergency Situations
[http://www.opm.gov/oca/compmemo/2008/HandbookForEmergencies\(PayAndLeave\).pdf](http://www.opm.gov/oca/compmemo/2008/HandbookForEmergencies(PayAndLeave).pdf)

Emergency Situations That Prevent Employees from Reporting for Work
<http://www.opm.gov/oca/compmemo/2003/PreventEmpsReportingforWork.asp>

Emergency Situations That Restrict Employees to Their Agency's Premises ("Shelter in Place")
<http://www.opm.gov/oca/compmemo/2003/ShelterInPlace.asp>

Furloughs Due to Extended Emergencies
<http://www.opm.gov/oca/compmemo/2003/Furloughs.asp>

Telework.Gov – Emergency Planning
http://www.telework.gov/guidance_and_legislation/emergency_planning/index.aspx

Appendix: OPM Announcements on the Status of Federal Government Operations in the Washington, DC, Area

STATUS OF FEDERAL GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS WASHINGTON, DC, AREA	
The U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) provides the following announcements to the media when a disruption occurs before or during the workday in the Washington, DC, area.	
Announcement	What Announcement Means
OPEN	<p>“Federal agencies in the Washington, DC, area are OPEN.”</p> <p>Employees are expected to report to their worksites or begin telework on time. Normal operating procedures are in effect.</p> <p>Employees account for their hours of work by WATS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working at a worksite in the DC area, • Alternative work schedules (AWS) day off, • Teleworking, or • Scheduled leave or other paid time off.

<p>OPEN WITH OPTION FOR UNSCHEDULED LEAVE OR UNSCHEDULED TELEWORK</p>	<p>“Federal agencies in the Washington, DC, area are OPEN and employees have the OPTION for UNSCHEDULED LEAVE OR UNSCHEDULED TELEWORK.”</p> <p><i>Non-Emergency Employees</i> must notify their supervisor of their intent to use unscheduled leave or unscheduled telework (if telework-ready). Non-emergency employees have the option to</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) use earned annual leave, compensatory time off, credit hours, or sick leave, as appropriate; (2) use leave without pay; or (3) request to use their flexible work schedule day off or rearrange their work hours under flexible work schedules. <p><i>Telework-Ready Employees</i> who are regularly scheduled to perform telework or who notify their supervisors of their intention to perform unscheduled telework must be prepared to telework for the entire workday, or take unscheduled leave, or a combination of both, for the entire workday in accordance with their agency’s policies and procedures, subject to any applicable collective bargaining requirements.</p> <p><i>Emergency Employees</i> are expected to report to their worksites on time unless otherwise directed by their agencies.</p>
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<p>OPEN – XX HOUR(S) DELAYED ARRIVAL – WITH OPTION FOR UNSCHEDULED LEAVE OR UNSCHEDULED TELEWORK</p>	<p>“Federal agencies in the Washington, DC, area are OPEN under XX HOUR(S) DELAYED ARRIVAL and employees have the OPTION FOR UNSCHEDULED LEAVE OR UNSCHEDULED TELEWORK. Employees should plan to arrive for work no more than XX hour(s) later than they would be expected to arrive. ”</p> <p><i>Non-Emergency Employees:</i></p> <p>Excused Absence. Non-emergency employees who report to their offices will be granted excused absence (administrative leave) for up to XX hour(s) past their expected arrival time.</p> <p>Use of Unscheduled Leave. Non-emergency employees may notify their supervisors of their intent to (1) use earned annual leave, compensatory time off, credit hours, or sick leave, as appropriate; (2) use leave without pay; or (3) request to use their flexible work schedule day off or rearrange their work hours under flexible work schedules.</p> <p><i>Telework-Ready Employees</i> who are regularly scheduled to perform telework or who notify their supervisors of their intention to perform unscheduled telework must be prepared to telework for the entire workday, or take unscheduled leave, or a combination of both, for the entire workday in accordance with their agency’s policies and procedures, subject to any applicable collective bargaining requirements.</p> <p><i>Pre-approved Leave.</i> Employees on pre-approved leave for the entire workday or employees who requested unscheduled leave for the entire workday should be charged leave for the entire day.</p> <p><i>Emergency Employees</i> are expected to report to their worksites on time unless otherwise directed by their agencies.</p>
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**OPEN - XX HOUR(S)
STAGGERED EARLY
DEPARTURE**

“Federal agencies in the Washington, DC, area are **OPEN**. Employees should depart **XX HOUR(S)** earlier than their normal departure times and may request **UNSCHEDULED LEAVE** to depart prior to their staggered departure times.”

Non-emergency Employees:

Excused Absence. Non-emergency employees will be dismissed from their offices **XX hour(s)** early relative to their normal departure times and will be granted excused absence (administrative leave) for the number of hours remaining in their workdays.

Departure Prior to Early Dismissal Time.

Non-emergency employees who depart prior to their staggered early departure times may request to use unscheduled leave. Such employees will be charged leave for the remainder of their workday and will not be granted excused absence.

Telework-Ready Employees performing telework must continue to telework or take unscheduled leave, or a combination of both for the entire workday or the remainder of the workday, as applicable, in accordance with their agency’s policies and procedures, subject to any applicable collective bargaining requirements.

Pre-approved leave. An employee on pre-approved leave for the entire workday or an employee who has requested unscheduled leave before an early departure policy is announced should continue to be charged leave for the remainder of the workday.

Emergency Employees are expected to remain at their worksites unless otherwise directed by their agencies.

**OPEN - XX HOUR(S)
STAGGERED EARLY
DEPARTURE – ALL
EMPLOYEES MUST DEPART
NO LATER THAN XX: XX AT
WHICH TIME FEDERAL
OFFICES ARE CLOSED TO
THE PUBLIC.**

“Federal agencies in the Washington, DC, area are **OPEN**. Employees should depart **XX HOUR(S)** earlier than their normal departure times and may request **UNSCHEDULED LEAVE** to depart prior to their staggered departure times. All employees **MUST DEPART** at no later than **XX: XX** at which time **FEDERAL OFFICES** in the Washington, DC, area are **CLOSED TO THE PUBLIC.**”

Non-emergency Employees:

Excused Absence. Non-emergency employees will be dismissed from their offices early relative to their normal departure times or at the final departure time and will be granted excused absence (administrative leave) for the number of hours remaining in their workday beyond their early departure times or their final departure time.

Departure Prior to Early Dismissal Time.

Non-emergency employees who depart prior to their staggered early departure times or final departure time may request to use unscheduled leave. Such employees will be charged leave for the remainder of their workday and will not be granted excused absence.

Pre-approved leave. Employees on pre-approved leave for the entire workday or employees who have requested unscheduled leave before an early departure policy is announced should continue to be charged annual or sick leave for the entire day or remainder of the workday, as applicable.

Telework-Ready Employees performing telework must continue to telework or take unscheduled leave, or a combination of both for the entire workday in accordance with their agency’s policies and procedures, subject to any applicable collective bargaining requirements.

Emergency Employees are expected to remain at their worksites unless otherwise directed by their agencies.

**IMMEDIATE DEPARTURE –
FEDERAL OFFICES ARE
CLOSED TO THE PUBLIC**

“IMMEDIATE DEPARTURE. Employees should depart **IMMEDIATELY. FEDERAL OFFICES** in the Washington, DC, area are **CLOSED TO THE PUBLIC.”**

Non-emergency employees should depart immediately from their office. All non-emergency employees will be granted excused absence (administrative leave) for the number of hours remaining in their workday unless they are:

- on official travel outside of the Washington, DC, area,
- on leave without pay, or
- on an alternative work schedule (AWS) day off.

Telework-Ready Employees performing telework must continue to telework for the entire workday or take unscheduled leave for the remainder of the workday, as applicable in accordance with their agencies’ policies and procedures, subject to any applicable collective bargaining requirements.

Emergency Employees are expected to remain at their worksites unless otherwise directed by their agencies

**FEDERAL OFFICES ARE
CLOSED TO THE PUBLIC**

“**FEDERAL OFFICES** in the Washington, DC, area are **CLOSED TO THE PUBLIC.**”

Non-emergency employees (including employees on pre-approved paid leave) will be granted excused absence (administrative leave) for the number of hours they were scheduled to work unless they are:

- required to telework,
- on official travel outside of the Washington, DC, area,
- on leave without pay, or
- on an alternative work schedule (AWS) day off.

Telework-Ready Employees who are scheduled to perform telework on the day of the announcement or who are required to perform unscheduled telework on a day when Federal offices are closed to the public must telework the entire workday or request leave, or a combination of both, in accordance with their agencies’ policies and procedures, subject to any applicable collective bargaining requirements.

Emergency Employees are expected to report to their worksites unless otherwise directed by their agencies

SHELTER-IN-PLACE	<p>“FEDERAL OFFICES in the Washington, DC, area are under SHELTER-IN-PLACE procedures and are CLOSED TO THE PUBLIC.”</p> <p><i>Employees Located at Agency Worksite.</i> All employees should follow their agency’s emergency procedures for shelter-in-place. Employees should remain in their designated safe area until they are notified by agency officials that they may return to the office or leave the worksite.</p> <p><i>Telework-Ready Employees</i> performing telework are expected to continue working during the shelter-in-place, unless affected by the emergency or otherwise notified by their agencies.</p>
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UNITED STATES
OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT
Employee Services
Pay and Leave
1900 E Street, NW
Washington, DC 20415