

Jefferson County

Employee Administrative Rules & Regulations



Emergency Closing/Inclement Weather

Rule Number: 5.1.13
Date Established: Administrative Order 77-1 – 2/29/96
Date of Last Revision: 10/19/17
Date of Current Revision: 5/2/18

1.0 PURPOSE

The purpose of this Rule is to set forth Jefferson County’s Administrative Rule for inclement weather and emergency preparedness. This Rule provides the structure necessary to ensure the safety of County employees and the continuity of Jefferson County services. Departments within Jefferson County shall establish procedures consistent with this Rule which detail for employees how they should proceed during inclement weather and/or an emergency situations. This Rule applies to all County officials, employees, management and contractors.

2.0 DEFINITIONS

- 2.1 Inclement Weather: Severe or harsh weather--usually extreme cold and wet that may cause unsafe travel conditions.
- 2.2 Disaster: Extraordinary circumstances due to weather or unforeseen business interruptions.
- 2.3 Natural Disaster: A disaster caused by natural elements, including tornados, thunderstorms, earthquakes, fires, floods, ice storms, etc.
- 2.4 Mobilization Plan: A plan used in the event of emergency to ensure the safety of County employees and/or patrons in a quick and efficient manner. The plan shall identify safe areas within County facilities, communications, evacuation, shelter, transportation and any other contingencies that may arise.
- 2.5 Emergency Alert Status: A status in which all Jefferson County employees must remain in a state of readiness in order to efficiently execute a mobilization plan.
- 2.6 Key Personnel: Individuals designated as necessary for essential and/or emergency services. The individuals so designated shall be filed with the County Manager, updated as changes are made and distributed to employees within the department.

3.0 RULE

Jefferson County will make every effort to maintain normal business hours during inclement weather. However, the County Manager, in consultation with the President of the County Commission, will determine when such an emergency should be declared and a mobilization plan executed. The personal

safety of Jefferson County employees and patrons is of the utmost importance. When inclement weather exists and/or emergency situations arise, employees are cautioned against taking unnecessary risks and asked to use their best judgment in determining when it is safe to travel. This Rule applies to all Jefferson County employees – both exempt and non-exempt.

- 3.1 Emergency Alert Levels: The County Manager or their designee, in consultation with the President of the County Commission or (in the absence of the President), the President Pro Tempore, may declare an emergency alert status. While in an emergency alert status, all employees will place themselves in a state of readiness. Employees should stay in contact with their department heads or designee in order to be notified of any change in status. Jefferson County has three primary alert operational levels. These levels may be modified, and intermediate levels utilized depending on the nature of the emergency, the needs of the public and/or requirements of the County.

Level 1: Operations and business as normal.

Level 2: A weather or emergency condition may make travel to and from a County facility difficult for some employees or members of the public, but the condition has not been determined severe enough to warrant the suspension of public service.

Level 3: A weather or emergency condition exists that is severe enough to delay opening, or closure of some or all County offices and suspension of business services to the public.

- 3.2 Employee Obligation to Report for Duty: It is the responsibility of the employee to contact their department head or designee in the event of inclement weather or other emergency situation. If phone lines are inoperable, employees should contact their department head or designee by alternate means as soon as possible. An employee's obligation to report for duty will depend on the operation level of the County.

Level 1: Employees should report to work as scheduled. Normal level and overtime rules apply.

Level 2: Employees should make every reasonable effort to report to work as scheduled or called in. Unless designated as key personnel, a liberal leave Rule will be in effect. If conditions necessitate, employees will be allowed to remain home, report late, or leave work early without supervisory denial unless minimal staffing requirements must be maintained.

Level 3: Employees should make every reasonable effort to report to work as scheduled or called in, if identified as key personnel and able to do so in a safe manner. Employees who make a concerted effort to report to work during inclement weather or a declared emergency will be given reasonable consideration should they arrive late due to travel conditions. All other employees should remain on Emergency Alert status until notified or released.

- 3.3 Continuously Operating Facilities: Employees working in facilities which must operate twenty-four (24) hours per day shall make every reasonable effort to report to work as scheduled, even during officially declared emergencies, provided the employee can do so in a safe manner.

- 3.4 Transportation: Jefferson County may offer to transport essential employees in order to deal with the emergency or to adequately staff continuous operations during a declared emergency. Such employees are required to accept such transportation and report to work.
- 3.5 Violation of Rule: Any employee who fails to comply with any part of this Rule will be considered insubordinate and will be subject to disciplinary action.

4.0 PAY FOR EMERGENCY ALERT STATUS

The County Manager or their designee is directed to take all measures necessary to implement this Rule and to ensure that compensation is properly given in the event of a declared emergency, and that payroll coordinators throughout the County are educated as to the responsibilities accordingly.

Level 1:

- Employees reporting for work as scheduled will be paid at their regular rate of pay for all hours actually worked.
- Non-exempt employees who are able to report to work but have children/dependents whose schools, daycare or care facilities are closed may use available vacation time or be granted leave without pay.
- Exempt employees who are able to report to work but have children/dependents whose schools, daycare or care facilities are closed may use available vacation or be granted leave without pay for full day absences.

Level 2:

- Employees reporting for work as scheduled will be paid at their regular rate of pay for all hours actually worked.
- All regular, full-time non-exempt employees not scheduled to work but who are called in to work outside their regularly scheduled shift to address the impact of the weather conditions or emergency or to maintain adequate staffing levels will be paid according to normal County overtime Rule.
- All regular, full time employees scheduled to work, who make a reasonable attempt to report for duty, but are unable to report due to weather conditions must notify their immediate supervisor regarding their situation as soon as possible.

Non-exempt employees will have the following options:

- a) Request the use of accrued vacation time or variable holiday to cover the period of the absence.
- b) Request leave without pay to cover the period of the absence.
- c) Employees who fail to report during a weather or emergency condition without notifying their immediate supervisor of their situation will be deemed absent without leave.

- d) If probationary and provisional non-exempt employees are without available leave, they may be granted leave without pay.

Exempt employees will have the following options:

- a) Request the use of accrued vacation time or variable holiday to cover full day absences.
 - b) Request leave without pay to cover full day absences.
 - c) Exempt employees who fail to report during a weather or emergency condition without notifying their immediate supervisor of their situation will be deemed absent without leave and subject to disciplinary action.
 - d) If probationary and provisional exempt employees are without available leave, they may be granted leave without pay for full day absences.
- Probationary and provisional employees are expressly allowed to use accrued leave as necessary.
 - If probationary and provisional employees are without available leave, they may be granted leave without pay.

Level 3 and Employees of Continuously Operating Facilities:

- All regular, full-time non-exempt employees who are scheduled/mobilized to work will be paid according to the County overtime Rule for all hours worked during the emergency, in addition to their regular pay.
- All regular, full time employees who are not mobilized, or whose departments or facilities are closed, will be paid their regular pay and will not be required to use accrued leave during this time. This includes probationary and provisional employees.
- Employees of continuously operating facilities, who are scheduled to work, but are unable to report for their regular shift because conditions make it exceedingly difficult and inherently unsafe to do so, will be paid their regular pay and will not be required to use accrued leave during this time.
- If an office or facility is officially closed due to weather or other emergency during an employee's normal work shift and such employee is, therefore, required to leave early, the employee shall be paid for the remainder of their regular scheduled shift.
- If Level 3 operations are lifted during the shift and employees have already been notified not to report to work, such employees will be paid for their entire shift.
- Paid non-work time will not be counted as hours worked when computing overtime for non-exempt employees.
- Non-exempt employees refusing County provided transportation during an emergency will be considered absent without leave, but subject to disciplinary action and will not receive any form of compensation during such absence.

- Exempt employees refusing County provided transportation during an emergency will be considered absent without permission to take leave, and while granted paid leave, will be subject to disciplinary action.

5.0 COMMUNICATION

- County employees will receive notification of Inclement Weather or Emergency Closing Declarations and Declaration Expirations through the Emergency National and Rapid Alert System (RAPID Cast) or by direct contact from their supervisor or other departmental designated representative. It is the responsibility of the employee to ensure their contact information in the system and within their department stays correct.
- Information regarding the implementation of Level 2 or Level 3 operations will be posted on the County's website and sent to local television, radio and print media via press release.
- Notice will be posted on the entrances of affected facilities.
- It is the responsibility of each Elected Official and Department Head to be certain their employees are made aware of and receive a copy of this Rule and that each employee understands their responsibilities should it be activated.

6.0 DEPARTMENT GUIDELINES

Each Jefferson County Department must establish departmental guidelines for administering this Rule. All guidelines must be submitted to Human Resources for review before implementation. Guidelines should include, but are not limited to, the following information:

- Departmental maintenance of a roster of key personnel must be submitted to the County Manager's Office. It must be updated and resubmitted as necessary.
- Key personnel must be notified of their designation as such.
- Departmental maintenance of call in procedures which identify who (and when) employees should appropriately call during Emergency Alert levels.
- Training for Payroll Coordinators to appropriately address payroll issues during various Emergency Alert levels.
- An established system to reimburse employees for any improper deductions which result from an emergency closing or suspension of County services due to inclement weather or emergency situations.
- A method to identify and make employees aware of evacuation procedures, plans to shelter in place and other contingencies.
- Post signs and updated messaging in order to notify the public of closure and any changes in business schedules.