Governmentwide Dismissal and Closure Procedures

U.S. Office of Personnel Management

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Governmentwide Dismissal and Closure Procedures

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I. Introduction

The U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) is issuing a revised version of the Governmentwide Dismissal and Closure Procedures (Procedures) consistent with Presidential directives, OPM and the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Governmentwide policy guidance, and applicable laws, regulations, and other legal authorities. The Procedures assist agencies during emergencies, severe weather conditions including severe heat, natural disasters, poor air quality, and other incidents or hazards that cause disruptions to Federal Government operations. The effective application of these Procedures allows Government operations to continue without compromising the safety of Federal employees and the public.

II. General Policies and Procedures

The Procedures guide agencies in managing their employees to ensure critical Government services continue for the American people during emergencies, severe weather conditions, natural disasters, and other incidents that cause disruptions of Government operations—consistent with applicable statutory and regulatory requirements. The policies and procedures apply when an authorized official determines that Federal employees are prevented from safely traveling to or safely performing work at an approved work location. The inability to safely travel to an approved work location may result in "closure" of a Federal office (i.e., closed to the public and non-emergency employees) for the full day or authorization of a delayed arrival. Authorization of an early departure may be based on unsafe conditions at the work location or unsafe travel conditions affecting travel from the work location, both of which make it unsafe for the employee to continue to perform work at the location. Whenever a change in the operating status is made, it remains critical for certain Government operations to continue functioning.

A. Washington, DC, Operating Status Announcements

In the Washington, DC, area, OPM issues operating status announcements that apply to employees working in all Executive agencies with offices located inside the "Washington Capital Beltway." (Note: Throughout these Procedures, the phrase "Washington, DC, area" means the area located inside the Washington Capital

Beltway.) In the event of an area-wide work disruption, agencies should avoid taking independent action because changes in the commuting hours of Federal employees can result in significant disruption of the highway and mass transit systems. Following OPM's operating status announcements and policies allows for appropriate coordination with municipal and regional officials to reduce disruption of the highway and transit systems, alleviate traffic congestion, and treat impacted employees as consistently as possible.

Announcements on the status of Government operations in the Washington, DC, area will be available on the OPM website.

Agencies in the Washington, DC, area that are affected by a specific emergency situation, such as an emergency in or immediately surrounding an agency office building that is not regionwide, may take independent action regarding their operating status. Agencies should consider following these Procedures when making decisions for their employees affected by an agency-specific emergency situation.

B. Operating Status Announcements in Other Locations

Employees working in Federal agency offices located outside of the "Washington Capital Beltway" must follow the operating status announcements issued by their agency. Federal field office heads generally make workforce status decisions for their agencies' employees and report those workforce status decisions to their agencies' headquarters. Agencies located outside the "Washington Capital Beltway" should consider Governmentwide operating status announcements when developing local operating status announcements. Employees should always check their agencies' operating status. Agency-issued operating status announcements should include procedures concerning telework, arrival and departure times, and leave requests. Announcements on the status of Government operations outside the Washington, DC, area will be communicated to employees by each agency with offices in the impacted area using the methods commonly employed by the agency for this purpose.

C. Weather and Safety Leave

A Federal agency may provide weather and safety leave to an employee or a group of employees who are prevented from safely traveling to or performing work at an approved location due to: (1) an act of God; (2) a terrorist attack; or (3) another condition that prevents the employee or group of employees from safely traveling to or performing work at an approved location.

OPM's regulations and these Procedures make clear the circumstances in which weather and safety leave may be used. Operating status announcements issued by agencies must use the term "weather and safety leave" when an agency is approving an absence without charge to leave or loss in pay due to severe weather and other qualifying emergency situations covered by 5 U.S.C. 6329c. Agencies should work with the administrators of their timekeeping and payroll systems to properly record and report weather and safety leave (5 CFR 630.1607). Corresponding internal agency policies should also be consistent with law and OPM regulations.

> **Note:** Generally, non-telework program participants (e.g., employees not on written telework agreements) will be provided weather and safety leave for either a set amount of time or the entire workday depending on which operating status announcement applies: (1) delayed arrival, (2) early departure, or (3) closure. See Section IV B of the Procedures for more information.

D. Unscheduled Leave

Employees may request to use unscheduled leave during certain operating status announcements. Unscheduled leave is leave that is not scheduled in advance of the workday or workweek. An employee who requests unscheduled leave does not need to report to the worksite or perform unscheduled telework. Instead, that employee will be excused from duty for the workday and charged annual leave or other earned paid time off such as compensatory time off.

E. Unscheduled Telework

The Federal Government may use unscheduled telework, among other flexibilities, to promote continuity of operations by allowing Federal employees to continue their

work at an approved alternative worksite in certain emergency situations and for a limited duration. Agencies should carefully review their policies and procedures on the use of unscheduled telework during emergency situations for compliance with Presidential directives, OPM and OMB Governmentwide policy guidance, and any applicable law or other legal authority when establishing such arrangements. Unscheduled telework is a form of situational telework that is approved on a case-by-case basis and the hours worked are NOT a part of an ongoing and regular schedule. An employee must be a telework program participant and sign a situational telework agreement before using unscheduled telework.

Agencies may permit a telework program participant to perform unscheduled telework when an operating status announcement includes "unscheduled telework" only if such action would not unduly interfere with mission accomplishment. (A telework program participant may also be referred to as a "telework-ready employee" or "telework employee" in these Procedures.) Employees must always notify their supervisor of the intent to perform unscheduled telework when an operating status announcement provides for this option. Employees must follow their own agency's policies and procedures when unscheduled telework is an option.

Agencies should remind employees who request unscheduled telework that they must have an appropriate amount of work to complete during the workday while at home. If an employee does not have enough work, he or she must either take unscheduled leave for the entire workday or use a combination of unscheduled telework and unscheduled leave to account for any hours not worked. For more information, see OPM's Guide to Telework and Remote Work in the Federal Government.

Agencies should review telework eligibility for all employees to maximize telework capabilities during emergency situations. Agencies should also annually review and update, as needed, their current telework policies and execute (or renew) written telework agreements for those employees who are telework program participants. Agencies must also incorporate telework into the agency's continuity of operations (COOP) plans. (See 5 U.S.C. 6504(d)(1).) During any period that an agency is operating under a COOP plan, that COOP plan shall supersede any telework policy. (See 5 U.S.C. 6504(d)(2).)

F. Remote Work

Remote work is an alternative work arrangement that involves an employee performing his or her official duties at an approved alternative worksite away from an agency worksite, without regularly returning to the agency worksite during each pay period, consistent with the agency's remote work policy, a remote work agreement between the agency and the employee, and for positions identified by the agency as eligible for remote work. A remote worker is generally not granted weather and safety leave when the employee's parent office (i.e., the office where the employee would work but for the remote work arrangement) is closed, since the employee is able to safely perform work at an approved location. Weather and safety leave may be appropriate if the employee is unable to safely perform work at the remote worksite location. Remote workers must follow their agency's policies and procedures or contact their supervisors for further information and instructions.

Example: Alex is a remote worker in Dallas, TX. A major snowstorm hits the Washington, DC, area, where Alex's agency headquarters is located. OPM announces that all Federal offices will be closed in the Washington, DC, area. Alex does not receive weather and safety leave due to his status as a remote worker. Alex is not prevented from safely performing work at an approved location (e.g., the approved alternative worksite). (See 5 U.S.C. 6329c(b) and 5 CFR 630.1605(a)(1).) Alex should continue to work as scheduled or request leave or other paid time off.

G. Interaction of Weather and Safety Leave and Telework/Remote Work

Under OPM's weather and safety leave regulations, all telework program participants and remote workers are ineligible for weather and safety leave when a closure is announced except in rare circumstances when one of the exceptions under 5 CFR 630.1605(a)(2) applies. Generally, remote workers and employees approved for situational or unscheduled telework must continue working remotely or telework (as applicable), take other leave (paid or unpaid) or paid time off (as approved by the agency), or a combination of both, unless an exception applies. Generally, non-telework program participants (e.g., employees not on written telework agreements) will be provided weather and safety leave for the entire workday when a closure is announced.

Exceptions an agency may consider:

- *Unexpected weather.* An agency may provide weather and safety leave to a telework-ready employee who, in the agency's judgment, could not have reasonably anticipated the severe weather or other emergency condition and therefore did not take home needed equipment or work. For example, an area weather forecast changes dramatically during the weekend so an employee cannot reasonably be expected to telework on Monday.

Note: Generally, agencies **will not** provide weather and safety leave to **remote workers** during unexpected weather or other emergencies. Remote workers will have all necessary equipment and work available at the alternative worksite.

- *Unsafe work site.* An agency may provide weather and safety leave to a telework-ready employee or remote worker who is prevented from safely working at the telework site/remote work site (such as by loss of electricity, flooding, a roof collapse, etc.) because of severe weather or another emergency event. In this case, **the home or other approved work site is also impacted** in such a way that work cannot be safely performed.

Note: Generally, agencies **will not** provide weather and safety leave to a telework program participant or remote worker who is not prevented from working safely at an approved alternative work site. Such employees **will not** receive weather and safety leave as the employees are not prevented from safely performing work at an approved location. (See 5 U.S.C. 6329c(b) and 5 CFR 630.1605(a)(1).)

Agencies should implement policies and procedures regarding telework or remote work and the various weather and safety leave exceptions. Agencies have the discretion to make those exceptions consistent with the regulatory provisions for weather and safety leave. Those exceptions, and the procedures under which an agency may provide weather and safety leave, should be clearly communicated to agency employees.

H. Employees on Preapproved Leave (Paid or Unpaid) or Other Paid Time Off

OPM's weather and safety leave regulations do not allow employees to receive weather and safety leave for hours during which those employees are on preapproved leave or other paid time off. (See 5 CFR 630.1606(c).) Periods of paid leave include annual and sick leave. Other paid time off includes credit hours, compensatory time off, and time off award hours. Agencies should not approve weather and safety leave for an employee, who in the agency's judgment, requests to cancel his or her preapproved leave (paid or unpaid) or paid time off primarily for the purpose of obtaining weather and safety leave. If the employee was not expected to report to duty during a period for which weather and safety leave might otherwise have been authorized, there is generally no need for the agency to provide weather and safety leave to relieve the employee from the obligated workday (e.g., work hours). Supervisors may request sufficient information or documentation to show that granting weather and safety leave is appropriate (e.g., documentation that the same weather/safety event caused cancellation of travel plans or of a doctor's appointment).

Example 1 - Preapproved Annual Leave for Out-of-Area Trip Not Impacted by Weather Event: Jon is a Federal employee who is scheduled to take annual leave for vacation covering February 3-10. On February 4, a massive snowstorm hits the Washington, DC, area. OPM announces that Federal offices are closed on February 4-7. Upon returning from vacation on February 10, Jon requests to have his annual leave replaced with weather and safety leave for February 4-7. Jon's request is denied, since he was on preapproved annual leave and was not expected to perform work or travel to the approved worksite. Weather and safety leave may be granted only to employees who are prevented from safely traveling to or safely performing work at an approved work location due to a weather or other emergency event.

Example 2 - Preapproved Annual Leave in Trip Cancellation Scenario: Rachel is a remote worker stationed in New York City who is scheduled to take annual leave for a California vacation covering December 15-31. On December 15, a major snowstorm hits the New York City area. Rachel's agency announces that agency offices in New York City are closed on that day due to the major snowstorm. Rachel's flight to California on the morning of December 15 is cancelled due to the snowstorm. Rachel requests to cancel her annual leave on December 15, since the snowstorm caused her travel plans to change. The agency approves the leave cancellation and Rachel performs work remotely during the snowstorm. She does not receive weather and safety leave.

Example 3 - Preapproved Sick Leave Example: Ray is a Federal employee who works in the Washington, DC, area. He is scheduled to be on sick leave for the entire day for a scheduled outpatient procedure on February 5. Due to a snowstorm, his office is closed on February 5. Because of the same snowstorm, Ray's outpatient procedure is also cancelled. Ray requests to cancel his sick leave due to the cancellation of the outpatient procedure. His agency determines that Ray should be permitted to cancel his sick leave since the request for sick leave is no longer valid. Since Ray is unable to use his sick leave for the purposes intended and he is not a telework program participant, he may be granted weather and safety leave.

Example 4 - Preapproved Leave without Pay (LWOP) Example: Sally, a Federal employee who works in the Washington, DC, area, is on LWOP under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) from January 2 to March 30 to recover from surgery. OPM announces that Federal offices are closed on February 4-7 due to a massive snowstorm. Sally requests weather and safety leave for the February 4-7 closure. Sally's request is denied, since she was on preapproved LWOP and not expected to perform work or to travel to an approved worksite. Her choice to use LWOP, not the snowstorm, prevented her from working or having to travel to a worksite.

I. Employees on Alternative Work Schedules

There are two types of alternative work schedules (AWS): flexible work schedules (FWS) and compressed work schedules (CWS). Under a FWS program, an employee has an 80-hour biweekly basic work requirement that allows an employee to determine his or her own schedule within the limits set by the agency, while under a CWS program the work schedule is fixed with no flexibility. Both FWS and CWS programs may permit an employee to complete his or her basic work requirement in less than 10 workdays in a biweekly pay period, in which case the employee would be entitled to an AWS day off (i.e., FWS day off, CWS day off). For more information on AWS, please see OPM's Handbook on Alternative Work Schedules.

Note: An employee is not entitled to an "in-lieu-of" AWS day off when a closure occurs on the scheduled AWS day off. The AWS day off must be treated the same as any other non-workday (Saturday and Sunday for most employees).

Agencies should establish policies concerning weather and safety leave and alternative work schedules. In particular, agencies may establish policies that would allow an employee participating in the FWS program to move his or her FWS day off to cover a day when the employee would be otherwise expected to work (e.g., telework or remote work) or take leave that the employee has earned. This policy could be used on a day when there is an operating status announcement allowing unscheduled leave or unscheduled telework on a day on which an employee had been scheduled to work. Agency policies could allow an employee to change his or her FWS day off to be used on the day impacted by the operating status announcement. The employee would have no work or leave requirement on the impacted day, since it is now the employee's FWS day off. On the employee's originally scheduled FWS day off, the employee would now work a full workday.

Similarly, if there is an announcement that agencies are closed, an impacted employee who is a telework program participant or remote worker would not receive weather and safety leave (unless a regulatory exception applies) and would be expected to either telework or remote work or use his or her personal leave (or other paid time off). An agency policy could allow such an employee to change his or her FWS day off to the impacted day to eliminate the requirement to use his or her personal leave (or other

paid time off) or telework. The employee would now work a full workday on the day that had been scheduled to be the employee's FWS day off.

Example 1: Ryleigh is a Federal employee working at the Department of Agriculture. She is approved for situational telework and works a flexible work schedule. Ryleigh typically has a regularly-scheduled FWS day off on the second Friday of each pay period. A winter storm occurs on the first Tuesday of the pay period. Ryleigh's agency announces that her office is closed. She would be expected to either telework or take leave (paid or unpaid) or other paid time off as she is a telework program participant. However, agency policies allow Ryleigh to move her regularly-scheduled FWS day off from the second Friday to the impacted day of the closure announcement (first Tuesday) to allow her to take care of her toddler. She opts to request this and does not have to telework or take leave or other paid time off on Tuesday. Instead, her absence from work on the affected day (Tuesday) is covered by her FWS day off, and the second Friday of the pay period becomes a regular workday.

However, agency policies should not permit an employee to switch his or her scheduled FWS day off to another workday when, in the agency's judgment, the change is being requested primarily for the purpose of allowing the employee to receive weather and safety leave on the previously scheduled FWS day off. If an employee is not scheduled to work, weather and safety leave is not applicable because the day is a non-workday.

Example 2: Maria works for the Department of Transportation. She does not participate in the agency telework program but does have a flexible work schedule. Her regularly-scheduled FWS day off is on the second Monday of the pay period. A major storm hits the area on the second Monday of the pay period, and her agency announces her office is closed. Maria requests to switch her FWS day off to the next day (Tuesday). Her agency denies the request, since Maria was already scheduled to be off on Monday and, in the agency's judgment, the requested change is primarily for the purpose of obtaining weather and safety leave. Also, Maria does not receive an "in-lieu-of" FWS day off.

In an emergency, timing is crucial. Federal agencies and employees must be prepared to respond immediately whether it be snow, a hurricane, or another emergency. It is imperative that agencies educate supervisors and employees on the proper protocol to follow when an emergency occurs. This includes the designation of emergency employees and educating both agencies and employees on roles and responsibilities.

Agencies must clearly communicate expectations to supervisors and employees in preparation for days on which a change in the operating status occurs. It is important that each employee understands what an OPM operating status announcement means and how to react. This requires agencies to update (as necessary) internal policies, including COOP plans and telework and remote work agreements, to reflect employee requirements under emergency operating procedures. Agencies must also provide guidance on human resources flexibilities that are available to employees during specific agency operating procedures (e.g., unscheduled telework, unscheduled leave, leave without pay, AWS day off). In an emergency situation, timing is very important. Employees must understand and be able to act immediately when (1) an operating status announcement includes the option for unscheduled telework or unscheduled leave, or (2) an operating status announcement requires employees to telework, such as when the Federal Government is closed.

A. Emergency Employees

Emergency employees are those employees who are expected to report on time to or remain at the worksite unless otherwise directed by their respective agencies during an operating status announcement. OPM does not provide a standard Governmentwide definition of an emergency employee because of the diversity in agency mission, employee occupations/skills, the variable nature of emergencies, weather and geographic conditions specific to duty locations, and many other factors.

1. Designation of Emergency Employees

OPM advises agencies to designate in advance those emergency employees who are critical to agency operations and will be expected (including security and infrastructure) to report in dismissal or closure situations. 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. Agency heads (or their designees, as applicable) should make such determinations based on the agency's unique mission requirements and/or circumstances. Such designations should be communicated to impacted employees at least annually (preferably in writing and well in advance) so employees can be prepared to support and sustain agency operations.

When Government operations are disrupted and offices are closed for an extended period, an agency may determine that changing circumstances require designated emergency employees and non-emergency employees to report for work. Consequently, each agency should establish policies to identify and notify employees who are expected to remain in contact with their agencies during dismissal or closure situations. To maintain continuity readiness, employees may be called to work during emergencies dealing with national security, extended emergencies, or other unique situations. An agency should anticipate the emergency situations under which such employees will be expected to report for work at a regular worksite or alternative worksite and any circumstances under which employees will be permitted to telework. Agencies should notify affected employees of this policy. Agencies may issue communication devices and other equipment to these employees to facilitate contact in emergency situations.

In rare circumstances, an agency may find it necessary to require an employee who is not designated as an emergency employee to report for an assignment that requires the employee's presence at the worksite (e.g., providing a presentation or performing administrative duties at a pre-scheduled conference). This should be a special work circumstance that both the supervisor and employee know about, discuss, and plan for in advance as the special work requirement evolves. This does not change the employee's status to an emergency employee. The requirement to report to the worksite recognizes that the absence of that employee would have an adverse impact on a special, pre-planned event, and since Federal offices remain open, the employee must make every effort possible to report to the worksite, as long as it is safe to do so. OPM strongly encourages agencies to communicate expectations explicitly to their supervisors and employees through internal agency policies, instructions, notices, procedures, and telework or remote work agreements to avoid any confusion on a day when an operating status change is made.

2. Interaction of Weather and Safety Leave and Emergency Employees

Emergency employees are expected to report to or remain at their worksite unless otherwise directed by their agencies. Generally, emergency employees do not receive weather and safety leave. (See 5 CFR 630.1605(b).) During certain emergencies, an agency may determine that the circumstances have made traveling to or performing work at the worksite unsafe for emergency employees. In these situations, the agency may either require the emergency employee to work at another location, telework (if eligible), or determine that circumstances justify providing weather and safety leave to emergency employees.

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.

B. Roles and Responsibilities

The following section provides the roles and responsibilities for OPM, agencies, and employees during severe weather and emergency situations.

1. OPM Responsibilities

In addition to providing the Federal Government's operating status in the Washington, DC, area, OPM has the authority to issue regulations and guidance on weather and safety leave. The following specifies OPM's responsibilities both Governmentwide and in the Washington, DC, area.

OPM's Governmentwide responsibilities include:

- *Issuance of guidance and regulations on workforce flexibilities.* OPM issues guidance and regulations governing various authorities used during emergency situations, including weather and safety leave, situational/unscheduled telework, evacuation payments, and emergency leave transfer programs.

- *Issuance of the Procedures.* OPM issues the Procedures for departments and agencies to use when preparing for an emergency or significant weather event that creates a disruption or impacts one or more Federal worksites.

- *Issuance of Governmentwide Operating Status Announcements.* OPM, in consultation with OMB, issues any operating status announcement and guidance that will be applicable Governmentwide (e.g., nationwide announcements affecting all agencies).

OPM's Washington, DC, Area responsibilities include:

- *Coordination and consultation with regional officials.* OPM works directly with the Washington Metropolitan Council of Governments, including the District of Columbia government, municipal and regional officials, along with the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority and other regional transportation officials regarding how to respond to severe weather, emergency situations, and other special events that cause disruptions in the Washington, DC, area.

- *Communication of any change to the operating status.* OPM communicates the Director's final decision on the Federal Government's operating status in the Washington, DC, area, through media outlets, social media, and the OPM website.

2. Agency Responsibilities

Agencies should establish policies and procedures that are consistent with OPM's weather and safety leave regulations and these Procedures.

Agency responsibilities include:

- *Issuance of operating status announcements.* Outside of the Washington, DC, area, agencies are responsible for issuing operating status announcements, as necessary. Those announcements should use the terminology set forth in this Governmentwide guidance, as appropriate. In the event of atypical circumstances, agencies may issue a new or hybrid operating status announcement to fit the particular situation.

- *Communication of expectations.* Operating status announcements are only effective if each employee understands what the announcement means and how to react. Employees must understand which options are available during specific agency operating procedures, such as unscheduled telework, unscheduled leave, etc. Agencies should also inform remote workers of any agency policies and procedures relating to operating status announcements.

- *Incorporation of telework into COOP plans.* Agencies must incorporate telework into the agency COOP plan. (See 5 U.S.C. 6504(d)(1).) This will allow agencies to maximize their use of telework during a COOP event in the future.

- *Review and revision of telework agreements.* Agencies should adjust telework agreements to reflect the weather and safety leave law, regulations, and these Procedures. Agencies cannot provide weather and safety leave to telework program participants who are not prevented from working safely at an approved telework site during severe weather or other emergency situations. Generally, a telework participant will be expected to telework when Federal offices are impacted by severe weather or an emergency situation.

- *Designation of emergency employees.* At least annually, agencies should identify and notify emergency employees in writing. The written notice should include the requirement that emergency employees report for work or remain at work at the official duty station when Government operations are disrupted. The notice should also include an explanation that announcements of unscheduled leave/unscheduled telework, delayed arrival, early or immediate departure, or Federal office closure do not apply to emergency employees unless instructed otherwise. Agencies should also notify employees that, if they are required to report for work and fail to do so, they may be charged absence without leave (AWOL) for the period not worked and may potentially be disciplined for AWOL upon further determination by the agency. In unique situations, an agency may determine that circumstances justify providing emergency employees with weather and safety leave. Telework agreements may include provisions addressing employees who are emergency workers, including the requirement to report to the worksite or to an approved alternative site when Government operations are disrupted.

- *Establishment of internal agency policies on requesting workforce flexibilities.* The procedures should specify how employees are to notify their supervisors promptly of their intent to use unscheduled leave or perform unscheduled telework 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 announcing an early departure with or without a final departure time or an immediate departure after the workday has already begun. Agencies must establish internal policies for employees regarding the use of unscheduled leave and flexible work schedules. This includes explicit policies on (1) the use of leave without pay, (2) the appropriateness of allowing an employee to change an FWS day off, and (3) the flexibility to rearrange starting and stopping times under a flexible work schedule—when an operating status announcement is made that allows for these workforce flexibilities to be used. Agencies should consult OPM's Handbook on Alternative Work Schedules to determine the "normal arrival and departure times" of employees on flexible schedules.

- *Establishment of internal agency policies on shelter-in-place.* 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.

- *Establishment of internal agency policies for employees working overnight or weekend shifts.* OPM's operating status announcements for the Washington, DC, area generally apply to employees who work during the day of a Monday-Friday workweek. Agencies should establish policies and procedures for any employees working night, weekend, or other types of shift work during a severe weather or other emergency in the Washington, DC, area when OPM's operating status announcements may not apply.

- *Tracking of weather and safety leave and work hours.* Agencies must use time and attendance or other systems to accurately track the number of hours that an employee works (including work performed via telework or remote work) and/or is provided weather and safety leave. Agencies must report telework, remote work, and weather and safety leave data to OPM following workforce data reporting instructions.

3. Employee Responsibilities

During an emergency situation or severe weather, employees will have to decide on a course of action based upon the operating status announcement made for the affected workday.

Employee responsibilities include:

- *Familiarization with operating status announcements.* Employees should review the various operating status announcements that are utilized and discuss with their immediate supervisor or manager, if necessary.

- *Preparation and planning.* Employees should be prepared and plan for when the forecast indicates severe weather is possible. For employees participating in a telework program, this includes taking any necessary equipment, such as laptops, home prior to a forecasted weather event.

- *Notification of supervisor/manager.* An employee must notify his or her immediate supervisor/manager of his or her status for the workday when an operating status announcement is made.

- *Accurate reporting and accounting of work time.* An employee must accurately record in time and attendance and other agency systems the number of hours in his or her scheduled workday, through telework or remote work, leave (paid or unpaid), or a combination of both. Such records must be certified by the employee's supervisor or other agency approving official.

IV. Operating Status Announcements

This section provides policies and procedures that apply when OPM or an agency issues an operating status announcement. Operating status announcements are generally issued when weather or other emergency conditions prevent Federal employees from safely traveling to or safely performing work at an approved work location. The inability to safely travel to an approved work location may result in "closure" of a Federal office for the full day or an authorization of a delayed arrival. Authorization of an early departure may be based on unsafe conditions at the work location or unsafe travel conditions affecting travel from the work location, both of

which make it unsafe for the employee to continue to perform work at the location. Depending on the conditions that affect a workday, the various operating status announcements have different procedures and application to an employee's workday. It is important that employees understand what each operating status announcement means and how it works. The use of operating status announcements is subject to applicable law, regulations, and agency policies and procedures. It is critical for certain Federal Government operations to continue to function, even when Federal offices are closed. The successful use of these operating status announcements, in conjunction with telework and other workforce flexibilities, will allow for both the safety of Federal employees and continuity of operations.

A. Governmentwide Operating Status Announcements

In rare circumstances, OPM could issue a Governmentwide operating status announcement that impacts the entire Federal workforce within the United States. Governmentwide operating status announcements will be coordinated with OMB and posted on the OPM website. Any Governmentwide operating status announcement will clearly state that it applies nationwide. Further instructions on implementation of a Governmentwide operating status announcement will come from both OPM and OMB.

B. Standard Operating Status Announcements

The operating status announcements described below (and listed in the Appendix) should generally be used during weather events and other local emergencies. Agencies should work to familiarize employees with these operating status announcements so employees are prepared to act. An operating status announcement should identify the affected geographic area. If the announcement affects only one agency or a selected group of agencies, that information should be part of the announcement. In the operating status announcements shown in the Appendix, OPM has placed "specified Federal offices in specified locations" in brackets as a placeholder. While an announcement may indicate there is an option for unscheduled leave or unscheduled telework, agencies retain the discretion to not allow the option of unscheduled leave or unscheduled telework for some or all employees due to mission requirements. An agency may exclude that option or limit its application, as appropriate.

1. Open

Federal agencies are "Open." Employees are expected to begin the workday on time. Normal operating procedures are in effect.

2. Open with Option for Unscheduled Leave or Unscheduled Telework

Employees have the option to use unscheduled leave or unscheduled telework. Employees must notify the supervisor of their intent to use unscheduled leave or unscheduled telework (if the employee is a telework program participant). Remote workers and employees previously approved to telework continue to work and may request to take unscheduled leave.

Example 1: Steve works for the Department of the Interior. He is a participant in his agency's telework program and may request situational telework under his agency policies. A snowstorm hits that impacts his worksite. Steve's agency announces that the agency is open with the option for "unscheduled telework or unscheduled leave." Steve notifies his supervisor that he intends to perform unscheduled telework and starts to work at his normal start time.

In rare circumstances, an agency may find it necessary to require an employee to report to work on a day when an unscheduled leave/unscheduled telework operating status is made.

Example 2: Jennifer works for the Department of State in Washington, DC, and participates in her agency's telework program and may request situational telework under her agency policies. Although Jennifer would normally be permitted to take unscheduled telework, she is required to work at an event that supports foreign area diplomats that are visiting the Washington, DC, area. Jennifer's supervisor requires her to report to the office to work at the diplomatic event. Jennifer is not permitted to telework from home or take leave.

3. Delayed Arrival

During a delayed arrival operating status announcement, remote workers and employees regularly scheduled to telework that day are expected to begin work on time

or request leave or other paid time off and should not be granted weather and safety leave.

Option 3a: Open—X Hour(s) Delayed Arrival—with Option for Unscheduled Leave or Unscheduled Telework

Employees should plan to arrive for work no more than X hour(s) later than they would normally be expected to arrive. Employees who report to the regular worksite are granted weather and safety leave for the hours between the employee's typical arrival time and the final reporting time, except that such leave is reduced if the employee arrives at work before the final reporting time.

Note: On a day with a delayed arrival operating status announcement, a telework program participant does not need to telework if he or she is reporting to the office. The employee will be granted weather and safety leave for the time between his or her typical arrival time and the actual reporting time.

As an alternative, eligible employees may notify their supervisors that they are using the option of unscheduled leave or unscheduled telework (if eligible) instead of reporting to the regular worksite, in which case the employees will not receive weather and safety leave—and will be responsible for accounting for the entire workday by taking other leave (or paid time off), performing telework, or a combination of both.

Example 1: Julie works for the Federal Trade Commission in Chicago, Illinois. She typically arrives at her agency worksite at 8:00 a.m. If a 2-hour delayed arrival policy is announced by the Federal Trade Commission in Chicago, she should arrive for work no later than 10:00 a.m. She will be granted weather and safety leave for up to 2 hours but may arrive at her office earlier. The maximum amount of weather and safety leave that Julie may be provided under this announcement is 2 hours.

Example 2: Nathan works for the Department of the Interior in Washington, DC, and is a telework program participant and may request situational telework under his agency policies. A snowstorm occurs impacting Washington, DC. OPM announces a 2-hour delayed arrival. Nathan requests to perform unscheduled telework. He does not receive any weather and safety leave and will be expected to begin the workday on time or take leave or other paid time off.

Option 3b: Open—Delayed Arrival—Employees Should Report to Their Office No Later Than XX:XX—With Option for Unscheduled Leave or Unscheduled Telework

Employees should plan their commutes to arrive at the worksite by no later than the final reporting time in the announcement. Employees who report to the worksite are granted weather and safety leave for the hours between the employee's typical arrival time and the final reporting time, except that such leave is reduced if the employee arrives at work before the final reporting time.

If employees choose to use unscheduled telework versus reporting to the worksite, the employees will not receive weather and safety leave for the delayed arrival period since they would not be impacted by the conditions under which the announcement was made. In this scenario, weather and safety leave is provided only to those employees who report to the regular office location.

Example 1: Elizabeth and Doug both work for the Department of Homeland Security in Washington, DC. Following a snowstorm, OPM issues a delayed arrival announcement stating all employees must arrive no later than 11:00 a.m. The delayed arrival announcement also advises that employees have the option of unscheduled leave or unscheduled telework. Elizabeth typically arrives at her worksite at 7:00 a.m. She will be granted weather and safety leave for up to the number of hours during the period between her typical arrival time and the final reporting time specified in the announcement. Thus, the maximum amount of weather and safety leave that she may be provided under this announcement is 4 hours (the time between 7:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m.). Elizabeth arrives at her worksite at 10:30 a.m. She is granted 3.5 hours of weather and safety leave and would begin working at 10:30 a.m. Meanwhile, Doug, who participates in his agency's telework program and may request situational telework under his agency policies, notifies his supervisor that he will perform unscheduled telework on that same day. He begins work on time and works his regular tour of duty. He does not receive any weather and safety leave and must telework for the entire workday; if not, he must request leave (paid or unpaid) or other paid time off, or use some combination of telework and leave (or other paid time off).

As discussed in Option 3a, employees who request unscheduled leave or other paid time off under a delayed arrival announcement will be charged leave or other paid time off for the entire period of their workday. Employees will not receive weather and safety leave for the number of hours provided to employees who commute to their worksite.

Example 2: Jane works for the Department of Agriculture in Topeka, Kansas. Following an ice storm, a delayed arrival announcement is made by the Department stating all employees must arrive no later than 2 hours past the employee's normal arrival time. The delayed arrival announcement also advised that employees may request unscheduled leave (paid or unpaid) or other paid time off or unscheduled telework for the day. Jane notifies her supervisor that she would like to take unscheduled leave (in the form of annual leave) for the day and not commute to the worksite. Jane is charged annual leave for her entire workday and is not provided any weather and safety leave.

An agency may grant, on a case-by-case basis, additional weather and safety leave to an employee who reports to the worksite after the final reporting time in the announcement when the employee's late arrival time is due to circumstances beyond the control of the employee.

Example 3: Bruce works for the Department of Commerce in Washington, DC, and is not eligible for telework. Bruce typically arrives at the worksite around 9:00 a.m. and his commute takes around 45 minutes. Following a snowstorm, a delayed arrival announcement is made by OPM stating all employees must arrive at the office by no later than 11:00 a.m. Bruce departs his home at 9:30 a.m. to arrive at the office by 11:00 a.m. However, due to poor driving conditions, Bruce arrives at 11:30 a.m. Bruce's supervisor determines that his arrival after 11:00 a.m. was beyond Bruce's control and grants an additional 30 minutes of weather and safety leave.

4. Early Departure

Because of a weather or other safety-related emergency, agencies may need to allow employees to depart work before the end of the workday. There are several options for managing early departures. In two of the options below (4a and 4b), the early departure time is based on when each employee's workday would normally end. While the descriptions of these options reflect the default departure methods, agencies issuing operating status announcements in areas outside of Washington, DC, may choose to use a different departure method and adjust the operating status announcement accordingly.

Option 4a: Early Departure – X Hour(s) Early Release

Employees depart a set number of hours earlier than their normal departure times and will be granted weather and safety leave for the number of hours remaining in their workday, except as otherwise provided for telework program participants and remote workers. Remote workers must continue to work during an early departure announcement or take unscheduled leave or other paid time off, or a combination of both, for the remainder of their tour of duty and generally should not be granted any weather and safety leave.

Example 1: Kate works for the Internal Revenue Service in Syracuse, New York. She works from 9:00 a.m. until 5:30 p.m. each day and does not participate in her agency's telework program. In anticipation of a major blizzard forecast to hit the region, a 3-hour early departure is announced by the Internal Revenue Service in Syracuse, New York. Kate may leave work 3 hours earlier than normal (2:30 p.m.) and will receive weather and safety leave for the remainder of her workday (2:30-5:30 p.m.).

Example 2: Tanner works for the Department of Education in Minneapolis, Minnesota, from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. He does not participate in his agency's telework program. Tanner attends a mid-day doctor appointment from 1:00 – 2:30 p.m. on Tuesday for which he uses preapproved sick leave. A snowstorm occurs during the workday on Tuesday impacting Minneapolis. The Department of Education in Minneapolis announces a 3-hour early departure, which would normally result in a 1:30 p.m. departure for Tanner. Tanner was able to keep his doctor appointment as scheduled. Tanner will remain on preapproved sick leave between 1:00-2:30 p.m. even though an early departure has been announced. He will receive weather and safety leave for the remainder of his workday after the completion of his doctor's appointment (2:30-4:30 p.m.).

Example 3: Harold works for the General Services Administration and is a remote worker in Denver, CO. A snowstorm occurs during the workday impacting Washington, DC. OPM announces a 3-hour early departure. Harold does not receive any weather and safety leave and will be expected to complete the remainder of the workday or take leave or other paid time off.

Telework program participants working in the office when an early departure is announced generally may receive weather and safety leave only for the time required to commute home (excluding the time for an unpaid lunch break, if applicable). This means that telework program participants must complete the remaining time (if any) in their workday by either teleworking or taking leave (paid or unpaid) or other paid time off once they arrive home unless one of the exceptions under 5 CFR 630.1605(a)(2) applies. If an employee arrives home after his or her workday has concluded, the

employee would not be required to work as there are no hours remaining in the workday (unless otherwise directed by his or her supervisor).

Example 4: Jon works for the Railroad Retirement Board in Chicago, Illinois. He currently participates in his agency's telework program and is authorized situational telework. Jon's agency recommends a 3-hour early departure due to a major snowstorm in Chicago. Jon normally works from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and is currently working in the office. Jon may leave the Chicago office at 1:30 p.m. and commute home. Jon arrives home at 2:30 p.m. and completes the remainder of his workday via telework. He will receive weather and safety leave for the period it took for him to commute home (1:30-2:30 p.m.). If Jon chooses not to complete the remainder of the workday once he arrives home, he must request unscheduled leave or other paid time off for the remainder of the day (from 2:30-4:30 p.m.) or a combination of both leave or other paid time off and telework.

Remote workers and employees who were already teleworking when an early departure announcement is made must continue to telework or take unscheduled leave or other paid time off, or a combination of both, for the remainder of their tour of duty unless one of the exceptions under 5 CFR 630.1605(a)(2) applies.

Note: An employee who departs prior to his or her early departure time may request to use unscheduled leave (paid or unpaid) or other paid time off and will not be granted weather and safety leave. A telework program participant may complete the remainder of his or her workday via unscheduled telework, upon supervisory/management approval. An employee is in an unscheduled leave (non-work) status during the commute time home when he or she chooses to leave prior to the scheduled departure time in the announcement.

Option 4b: Early Departure - X Hour(s) Early Release – All Employees Must Depart No Later Than XX:XX

Employees depart a set number of hours earlier than their normal departure time and will be granted weather and safety leave for the number of hours remaining in their workday (i.e., daily tour of duty established for purposes of charging leave), except as otherwise provided for telework program participants. Unlike option 4a, in option 4b

all employees are required to depart the office by the final departure time at which point the office is closed.

Telework program participants working in the office when an early departure is announced may receive weather and safety leave only for the time required to commute home (excluding the time for an unpaid lunch break, if applicable). Telework program participants must complete the remaining time in the workday by either teleworking or taking other leave or paid time off once they arrive home unless one of the exceptions under 5 CFR 630.1605(a)(2) applies.

Remote workers and employees who were already performing telework when an early departure announcement is made must continue to telework, take unscheduled leave or other paid time off, or a combination of both, for the remainder of their tour of duty unless one of the exceptions under 5 CFR 630.1605(a)(2) applies.

Example: Ashley works for the Federal Aviation Administration in Cleveland, Ohio. She works from 9:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. and does not participate in her agency's telework program. A crippling ice storm is forecast to hit the Cleveland area with the major impact occurring after 3:00 p.m. The Federal Aviation Administration in Cleveland, Ohio, decides on a 3-hour early departure with all employees departing no later than 2:30 p.m. Ashley will depart at 2:30 p.m. as the final departure time occurs earlier than her 3-hour early departure time (3:00 p.m.) would have. She will receive weather and safety leave for the remainder of her workday (3.5 hours) because she is not a telework program participant.

Option 4c: Immediate Early Departure

Employees working in the office must depart immediately and will receive weather and safety leave for the number of hours remaining in their workday, except as otherwise provided for telework program participants.

Telework program participants working in the office may receive weather and safety leave only for the time it takes to commute home from the office (excluding the time for an unpaid lunch break, if applicable). Telework program participants must complete the remaining time in the workday by either teleworking from home, requesting other leave or paid time off, or a combination of both.

Remote workers and employees already performing telework when an immediate departure announcement is made must continue to work, request unscheduled leave or other paid time off, or a combination of both, for the remainder of their tour of duty and will not receive weather and safety leave unless one of the exceptions under 5 CFR 630.1605(a)(2) applies.

Example 1: An earthquake hits a Naval Base in San Diego, California, and the base commander believes it is necessary to close the building to check for structural damage. The base commander announces an immediate departure at 12:00 p.m. (noon) out of concern for the safety of employees. Jack typically works from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and participates in his agency's telework program for situational telework. He leaves the base at 12:00 p.m. (before having his unpaid lunch period, which must be taken between 11:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. under agency rules) and arrives home at 12:30 p.m. He receives weather and safety leave for his 30-minute commute and will complete his workday by taking his half-hour lunch period before 1:30 p.m. and either teleworking or taking leave or other paid time off, or a combination of both, to cover the remainder of the workday.

A telework program participant may receive weather and safety leave for the remainder of the workday if, in the agency's judgment, he or she could not have reasonably anticipated the severe weather or emergency and thus is not prepared to telework. (See 5 CFR 630.1605(a)(2)(i).)

Example 2: Linda works for the Internal Revenue Service in Indianapolis, Indiana, and is an agency telework program participant and must situationally telework in emergencies under her agency policies. A fire breaks out in her building during her lunch period while she is away from the office, and her agency announces an immediate departure for all employees working in the building. Linda is not permitted to reenter the building to retrieve her laptop, which is needed to telework for the remainder of her workday. Her agency determines that the facts warrant an allowed exception as she could not anticipate the fire. The agency provides Linda with weather and safety leave for the remainder of the workday under the 5 CFR 630.1605(a)(2)(i) exception.

5. Office Closure

The office is closed for weather/safety reasons and maximum telework is in effect. In general, employees will be granted weather and safety leave for the number of hours they were scheduled to work unless they are (1) an emergency employee, (2) a telework program participant, (3) a remote worker, (4) on official travel outside of the duty station, (5) on preapproved leave (paid or unpaid) or other paid time off, or (6) on an AWS day off or other non-workday.

Exception for Weather and Safety Leave (Remote Work and Telework Rule)

Remote workers and telework program participants **do not** receive weather and safety leave when a closure is announced. Instead, they must work for the entire workday, take other leave (paid or unpaid) or other paid time off, or use a combination of work hours and leave or other paid time off unless one of the regulatory exceptions discussed further in this section applies.

Example 1 - No Weather and Safety Leave for Telework Program Participants: Bob works for the Department of Agriculture in Topeka, Kansas, and participates in his agency's telework program. His office is closed due to a major blizzard on a Monday. Bob's home is not affected by the storm in a way that affects his ability to telework, and he has his equipment and work files. As required by the law and regulations governing weather and safety leave, Bob is not granted weather and safety leave, since he is not prevented from safely performing work at an approved location (i.e., Bob's home). Instead, Bob must either telework for his entire workday, request leave (paid or unpaid) or other paid time off, or use a combination of telework and leave or other paid time off.

Example 2 - No Weather and Safety Leave for Remote Workers: Conrad works for the Department of Transportation as a remote worker in Alabama. Conrad's home is the approved remote worksite. A severe ice storm hits the local Alabama area, and a recommendation is made for all Federal offices in the area to be closed for the day. Conrad's home is not affected by the ice storm in a way that affects his ability to work. As required by the law and regulations governing weather and safety leave, Conrad is not granted weather and safety leave, since he is not prevented from safely performing work at an approved location. Instead, Conrad must either remote work for his entire workday, request leave (paid or unpaid) or other paid time off, or use a combination of remote work and leave or other paid time off.

While the general rule prohibits weather and safety leave for remote workers and telework program participants, OPM's regulations do allow for certain exceptions. A telework program participant may be granted weather and safety leave if, in the agency's judgment, he or she could not have reasonably anticipated the severe weather or emergency and thus were not prepared to telework. (See 5 CFR 630.1605(a)(2)(i).)

Example 3 - Exception to Weather and Safety – Telework Rule: Susan works for the Department of Homeland Security in North Carolina and participates in her agency's telework program and is allowed to request situational telework. When Susan teleworks, she must bring her work laptop from the office to her home. The weather forecast on Friday calls for mild temperatures and light rain the following Monday. Susan is not approved for telework on Monday, so she does not bring her laptop home. The weather forecast changes dramatically during the weekend and a large snowstorm hits the area. Susan's office is closed Monday and, under the general rule barring weather and safety leave during a closure for employees participating in a telework program, she normally would not receive weather and safety leave. However, her agency determines that the facts warrant an allowed exception as agency policy does not require employees to bring home necessary work and equipment, such as laptops, daily. Susan could not have reasonably anticipated the snowstorm. The agency provides Susan with weather and safety leave for the day under the 5 CFR 630.1605(a)(2)(i) exception.

Additionally, 5 CFR 630.1605(a)(2)(ii) provides another exception that permits agencies to provide weather and safety leave to a telework program participant if the employee

is prepared to work at the telework site but is prevented from safely working there due to the severe weather or emergency situation. Agencies may consider exercising their authority to grant weather and safety leave to telework program participants and remote workers on a case-by-case basis (e.g., for electricity/infrastructure/connectivity issues at the telework/remote work location).

Example 4 - Exception to Weather and Safety – Telework Rule: Ray works for the Department of the Interior in Maine and participates in his agency's telework program and may telework situationally. Ray intends to telework from home and has all the necessary equipment and materials to perform work. However, the high winds from the blizzard resulted in a power outage to his home, and Ray is unable to work at his telework site. Ray's agency determines that weather and safety leave would be appropriate under these circumstances since agency telework policies require electricity for a location to be an approved telework location.

An agency can choose not to provide weather and safety leave under the 5 CFR 630.1605(a)(2)(i) and (ii) exceptions when severe weather can reasonably be predicted and an employee has not taken the necessary steps to prepare for teleworking.

Example 5 - Telework Exception Not Applicable: Weather forecasts have been widely calling for a major snow event to occur on Wednesday in Washington, DC. Marci's agency has a policy that requires employees to be prepared to situationally telework throughout the year by monitoring weather forecasts and bringing home computer equipment in response to any potential weather event. As forecasted, a snowstorm occurs on Wednesday. OPM announced that Federal offices are closed. Marci is expected to telework, but she cannot because she did not bring home her laptop and/or work assignments. Her agency chose not to provide weather and safety leave because she failed to make the necessary preparations to telework. (See 5 CFR 630.1605(a)(3).) Marci must take leave (paid or unpaid) or other paid time off to account for her workday.

6. Shelter-In-Place

Shelter-in-place procedures are conducted when employees (and visitors) in a building must remain in the office or take immediate shelter in a readily accessible interior

location for safety and protection. A shelter-in-place may be activated 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. It is anticipated that a shelter-in-place announcement would be extremely rare and likely would be in effect for a relatively short period of time. This operating status announcement is not intended to supersede any agency-specific shelter-in-place plans or procedures, and agencies retain the authority to act without an OPM shelter-in-place operating status announcement, as circumstances dictate.

Employees should follow their agency's emergency procedures for shelter-in-place announcements. Employees should remain in designated safe areas until they are notified by agency officials that they may return to their offices or leave their worksites.

During a shelter-in-place emergency, employees may be restricted to the agency's premises for periods beyond their normal tour of duty because of events beyond the agency's control. Unless employees are required to perform work, they will not be entitled to any additional compensation for this extended period. The Comptroller General has ruled that periods of time during which an employee is required to remain at a work location are not considered compensable hours of work if the employee is detained for reasons that are not under the control of the agency or are not related to work requirements. (See Comptroller General opinion B-187181, October 17, 1977.)

Remote workers and employees teleworking are expected to continue working during the shelter-in-place unless affected by the emergency or otherwise notified by their agencies.

C. Application to the Washington, DC, Area

OPM provides the operating status for all Federal Executive agencies in the Washington, DC, area. The currently approved operating status announcements are listed in the Appendix and may also be found on the OPM website.

Operating Status for the Washington, DC, Area

OPM issues operating status announcements for employees in all Executive agencies with offices located inside the "Washington Capital Beltway" (the freeway that encircles the Nation's capital). In addition, some agencies may decide to apply the same announcement 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., portions of Montgomery and Prince George's Counties in Maryland; and portions of Fairfax County (including the independent city of Fairfax surrounded by Fairfax County). However, agencies may decide 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, OPM may issue guidelines affecting agency facilities outside the Washington Capital Beltway.

Note: OPM operating status announcements in the Washington, DC, area 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. These entities may choose to implement and follow OPM's operating status announcements but are not required to do so.

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

To enhance safety and productivity, it is essential that covered Federal agencies and employees follow OPM operating status announcements for area-wide emergencies or special events that create a disruption in the Washington, DC, metropolitan area. The operating status announcements apply to employees working in all Executive agencies with offices located inside the "Washington Capital Beltway." The Procedures are based on the principle that the Federal Government's vital business must be carried out without compromising the safety of employees and the general public. 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 reduce disruption of the highway and transit systems. In addition, following OPM's

operating status announcements and policies will both reduce traffic congestion and support consistent treatment of affected employees.

Agency-Specific Announcements

For agency-specific emergencies, each agency is in the best position to determine the appropriate course of action. For example, power outages, building fires, or localized flooding could affect one or several facilities without requiring OPM to issue an announcement. Agencies have the authority to release employees and/or close individual facilities 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. This can include communications via email, phone, text messaging, or other electronic formats.

Additional Operating Status Announcements for the Washington, DC, Area

Over the years, the Washington, DC, area has experienced a wide variety of weather phenomena including historic amounts of snowfall, ice storms, earthquakes, high winds, hurricanes, and wildfire smoke. As a general principle, agencies and employees in the Washington, DC, area should be aware that OPM may need to issue a new or hybrid operating status announcement and should be prepared for OPM to do so at any time, depending on the particulars of the emergency, for the safety of employees, and the need for continuity of Government operations. OPM will always attempt to use the published operating status announcements found in the Appendix.

Note: Announcements on the status of Government operations in the Washington, DC, area will be available on the OPM website.

Appendix: Announcements on the Status of Federal Government Operations

The U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) provides the following announcements that should be used Governmentwide to announce the operating status of an office, agency, or geographic area. In the case of announcements issued by OPM for offices located inside the "Washington Capital Beltway" area, all Federal Executive agencies are covered. For other announcements issued by agencies in other locations, responsible agency officials must identify the affected agency(ies), office(s), and/or the affected geographic area. (See bracketed language regarding "specified Federal offices at specified locations.")

As a general principle, agencies may issue a new or hybrid operating status announcement at any time, depending on the particulars of an emergency, for the safety of employees and continuity of Government operations. Agencies should always attempt to use OPM's published operating status announcements. In rare circumstances, a Governmentwide operating status announcement may be issued.

Announcement	What Announcement Means
Open	"[The specified Federal offices at specified locations are] **Open**." Employees are expected to begin the workday on time. Normal operating procedures are in effect.
Open With Option for Unscheduled Leave or Unscheduled Telework	"[The specified Federal offices at specified locations are] **Open** and employees have the **Option for Unscheduled Leave or Unscheduled Telework**." ***Employees Requesting Unscheduled Telework*** must be prepared to telework, take unscheduled leave or other paid time off, or a combination—thereby accounting for the entire workday. ***Remote Workers and Telework Employees Scheduled to Telework*** are expected to begin their workday on time unless requesting unscheduled leave. ***Non-Telework Employees*** must report to the office on time or notify their supervisors of their intent to use unscheduled leave. ***Emergency Employees*** are expected to report to the worksites on time unless otherwise directed by their agencies.

Announcement	What Announcement Means
Open – X Hour(s) Delayed Arrival – With Option for Unscheduled Leave or Unscheduled Telework	"[The specified Federal offices at specified locations are] **Open** under a **X 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 X hour(s) later than they would normally be expected to arrive." ***Employees Requesting Unscheduled Telework*** must be prepared to telework, take unscheduled leave or other paid time off, or a combination—thereby accounting for the entire workday. In general, weather and safety leave is not available to telework employees who do not report to the office. ***Remote Workers and Telework Employees Scheduled to Telework*** are expected to begin their workday on time unless requesting unscheduled leave. In general, weather and safety leave is not available to remote and telework employees who do not report to the office. ***Non-Telework Employees*** are expected to either report to the office and be granted weather and safety leave for up to XX hour(s) past their normal arrival time **or** request unscheduled leave for the entire workday. Weather and safety leave is not available to those employees requesting unscheduled leave. ***Emergency Employees*** are expected to report to the worksite on time unless otherwise directed by their agencies. ***Employees on Preapproved Leave*** (paid or unpaid) or other paid time off (e.g., compensatory time off, credit hours)—including an employee who requests unscheduled leave or other paid time off—generally should be charged leave or other paid time off and not receive weather and safety leave.

Announcement	What Announcement Means
Open – Delayed Arrival – Employees Should Report To Their Office No Later Than XX:XX – With Option for Unscheduled Leave or Unscheduled Telework	"[The specified Federal offices at specified locations are] **Open** under a **Delayed Arrival** where employees should **Report To Their Office No Later Than XX:XX** and have the **Option for Unscheduled Leave or Unscheduled Telework**." ***Employees Requesting Unscheduled Telework*** must be prepared to telework, take unscheduled leave or other paid time off, or a combination—thereby accounting for the entire workday. In general, weather and safety leave is not available to telework employees who do not report to the office. ***Remote Workers and Telework Employees Scheduled to Telework*** are expected to begin their workday on time unless requesting unscheduled leave. In general, weather and safety leave is not available to remote and telework employees who do not report to the office. ***Non-Telework Employees*** are expected to either report to the office and be granted weather and safety leave for the hours between the employee's normal arrival time and the reporting time specified in the announcement, except that such leave is reduced if the employee arrives at work before the announced reporting time **or** request unscheduled leave for the entire workday. Weather and safety leave is not available to those employees requesting unscheduled leave. ***Emergency Employees*** are expected to report to the worksite on time unless otherwise directed by their agencies. ***Employees on Preapproved Leave*** (paid or unpaid) or other paid time off (e.g., compensatory time off, credit hours)—including an employee who requested unscheduled leave or other paid time off—generally should be charged leave or other paid time off and not receive weather and safety leave.

Announcement	What Announcement Means
Early Departure - X Hour(s) Early Release	"Employees of [specified Federal offices at specified locations] are authorized for **Early Departure**. Employees should depart **X Hour(s) earlier than their normal departure times** and may request **Unscheduled Leave** to depart prior to their scheduled early departure times." ***Telework Employees at the Office*** will receive weather and safety leave only for the time required to commute home. Once these employees arrive at home, they must complete any remaining portion of the workday by teleworking, taking unscheduled leave (paid or unpaid) or other paid time off, or a combination. ***Non-Telework Employees at the Office*** will be dismissed from their office **X hour(s)** early relative to their normal departure times and will be granted weather and safety leave for the number of hours remaining in their workday. ***Telework Employees Performing Telework*** are expected to continue working and generally may not receive weather and safety leave. They must account for the entire workday by teleworking, taking unscheduled leave (paid or unpaid) or other paid time off, or a combination. ***Remote Workers*** are expected to continue working and generally may not receive weather and safety leave. They must account for the entire workday by working, taking unscheduled leave (paid or unpaid) or other paid time off, or a combination. ***Emergency Employees*** are expected to remain at the worksite unless otherwise directed by their agencies. ***Employees Departing the Office Prior to Their Early Departure Time*** may request unscheduled leave (paid or unpaid) or other paid time off. Such employees will not be granted weather and safety leave for any part of the workday. ***Employees on Preapproved Leave*** (paid or unpaid) or other paid time off, including an employee who has requested unscheduled leave before an early departure is announced, generally should continue to be charged leave or other paid time off during the scheduled time and should not receive weather and safety leave.

Announcement	What Announcement Means
Early Departure - X Hour(s) Early Release– All Employees Must Depart No Later Than XX:XX	"Employees of [specified Federal offices at specified locations] are authorized for **Early Departure**. Employees should depart **X Hour(s) earlier than their normal departure time** and may request **Unscheduled Leave** to depart prior to their scheduled early departure time. All employees **Must Depart no later than XX:XX** at which time Federal offices are **Closed**." ***Telework Employees at the Office*** will receive weather and safety leave only for the time required to commute home. Once these employees arrive at home, they must complete any remaining portion of the workday by teleworking, taking unscheduled leave (paid or unpaid) or other paid time off, or a combination. ***Non-Telework Employees at the Office*** will be dismissed from their office **X hour(s)** early relative to their normal departure time but no later than the final departure time XX:XX (as applicable) and will be granted weather and safety leave for the number of hours remaining in their workday. ***Telework Employees Performing Telework*** are expected to continue working and generally may not receive weather and safety leave. They must account for the entire workday by teleworking, taking unscheduled leave (paid or unpaid) or other paid time off, or a combination. ***Remote Workers*** are expected to continue working and generally may not receive weather and safety leave. They must account for the entire workday by working, taking unscheduled leave (paid or unpaid) or other paid time off, or a combination. ***Emergency Employees*** are expected to remain at the worksite unless otherwise directed by their agencies. ***Employees Departing the Office Prior to Their Early Departure Time or the Final Departure Time*** (whichever is applicable) may request unscheduled leave (paid or unpaid) or other paid time off. Such employees will not be granted weather and safety leave for any part of the workday. ***Employees on Preapproved Leave*** (paid or unpaid) or other paid time off—including an employee who has requested unscheduled leave before an early departure policy is announced—generally should continue to be charged leave or other paid time off during the scheduled time and should not receive weather and safety leave.

Announcement	What Announcement Means
Immediate Early Departure	"[The specified Federal offices at specified locations] are **Closed** and on-site employees should **Depart Immediately**." ***Telework Employees at the Office*** will receive weather and safety leave only for the amount of time required to commute home. Once these employees arrive at home, they must complete any remaining portion of the workday by teleworking, taking unscheduled leave (paid or unpaid) or other paid time off, or a combination. ***Non-Telework Employees at the Office*** will be granted weather and safety leave for the number of hours remaining in their workday. ***Telework Employees Performing Telework*** are expected to continue working and generally may not receive weather and safety leave. ***Remote Workers*** are expected to continue working and generally may not receive weather and safety leave. ***Emergency Employees*** are expected to remain at the worksite unless otherwise directed by their agencies. ***Employees Departing Prior to the Immediate Departure Time*** may request unscheduled leave (paid or unpaid) or other paid time off. Such employees will not be granted weather and safety leave for any part of the workday. ***Employees on Preapproved Leave*** (paid or unpaid) or other paid time off—including an employee who has requested unscheduled leave before an immediate departure policy is announced—generally should continue to be charged leave or other paid time off during the scheduled time and should not receive weather and safety leave.

Announcement	What Announcement Means
Office Closure	"[The specified Federal offices at the specified locations are] **Closed**. **Maximum Telework is in effect**." ***Telework Employees*** are expected to work. Generally, telework employees may not receive weather and safety leave. ***Remote Workers*** are expected to work. Generally, remote workers may not receive weather and safety leave. ***Non-Telework Employees*** generally will be granted weather and safety leave for the number of hours they were scheduled to work. However, weather and safety leave will not be granted to employees who are on official travel outside of the duty station or on an Alternative Work Schedule (AWS) day off or other non-workday. ***Emergency Employees*** are expected to report to their worksite unless otherwise directed by their agencies. ***Employees on Preapproved Leave*** (paid or unpaid) or other paid time off generally should continue to be charged leave or other paid time off and should not receive weather and safety leave.
Shelter-In-Place	"[The specified Federal offices at specified locations] are under **Shelter-In-Place** procedures and are **Closed to the Public**." ***Employees Located at the Worksite*** should follow their agency's emergency procedures for shelter-in-place. Employees should remain in the designated safe area until notified by agency officials that it is safe to return to the office or leave the worksite. ***Remote Workers and Telework Employees*** performing work outside of the agency worksite (e.g., at home, an approved alternative location, etc.) are expected to continue working when there is a shelter-in-place incident at their agency worksite unless affected by the emergency or otherwise notified by the agencies.

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