



*a New Day for Federal Service*



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# **Washington, DC, Area Dismissal and Closure Procedures**

## **2014-2015 Winter Season**

The image shows a vertical strip of an American flag on the left side of the slide. It features the blue field with white stars and the red and white stripes.

# Overview

- The *Washington, DC, Area Dismissal and Closure Procedures* (Procedures) are used in situations that prevent significant numbers of Federal employees from –
  - Reporting to the office on time
  - Remaining at the office for the entire workday, or
  - Reporting to the office for the entire workday
- Examples would include severe weather conditions, natural disasters, and other special events

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# Overview (continued)

- The Procedures are designed to promote continuity of operations without compromising the safety of Federal employees and the general public.
- The Procedures cover Executive branch agencies within the “Capital Beltway”.
- Agencies located outside of the Capital Beltway may decide to develop separate plans for their facilities, as they may be subject to different weather and traffic condition.

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# 2014-2015 Procedure Highlights

The U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) reminds Federal agencies and employees on —

- Importance of Following OPM Operating Status Announcements
- Encourages Telework Policies and Procedures
- Communication of Expectations

One update—

- Employees on Pre-Approved Paid Leave When Federal Offices Are Closed

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# Importance of Following OPM Operating Status Announcements

- Since the early 1980's, the Director of OPM has made the final decision on the Federal Government's operating status in the Washington, DC, area 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.

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## **Importance of Following OPM Operating Status Announcements (continued)**

Following OPM's operating status announcements and policies will—

- Allow for coordination with municipal and regional officials
- Promote safety of employees and the general public
- Reduce disruption of the highway and transit systems
- Ensure that affected employees are treated as consistently as possible.

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# Agency Specific Emergencies

- Agencies have the authority to act on agency-specific emergencies and should not wait for OPM to make or update announcements—e.g. flood, power outage, building fire.
- Agencies are in the best position to determine the appropriate course of action for an agency-specific emergency.
- Each agency should have a method for communicating and updating operating status announcements that affect only their agency.



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# Telework Policies and Procedures

- The Telework Enhancement Act requires agencies to incorporate telework into their Continuity of Operation Plans (COOP).
- OPM advises agencies to make telework a standard part of all agency emergency planning to ensure the Government is well positioned to carry out its essential functions for COOP.
- To support the Act, OPM incorporated “unscheduled telework” into its operating Procedures.
- As a result “unscheduled telework” is now a standard human resources tool.

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# Telework Policies and Procedures (continued)

- To ensure telework is incorporated into their emergency procedures, agencies should—
  - Encourage employees to enter into written telework agreements, as appropriate
  - Communicate expectations before the emergency situation occurs
  - Practice and test equipment and procedures regularly throughout the year.
- Having telework arrangements in place allows a greater number of employees to work during emergency situation without compromising their safety.

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# Telework Policies and Procedures (continued)

- For continuity of operations purposes, agencies should be taking steps to require employees who are telework-ready to telework during days when the Federal offices are closed.
- This migration will support the Act, maintain productivity during closures, and keep our employees safe.

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# Communication of Expectations

- OPM's operating status announcements are only effective if each supervisor and employee understands what the announcements mean and how to react.
- Agencies must update their internal policies, including COOP plans and telework agreements to reflect employee requirements under emergency operating procedures.
- Employees must understand and be able to act immediately under their own agency's procedures and collective bargaining agreements.

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# Communication of Expectations (continued)

- Agencies must provide clear guidance on human resources flexibilities that are available to employees during specific agency operating procedures
  - Unscheduled Telework/Unscheduled Leave
  - Leave without pay
  - Alternative Work Schedule Day Off

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## **Employees on Pre-Approved Paid Leave When Federal Offices Are Closed**

- In the past, employees automatically received excused absence if they were on pre-approved paid leave when Federal offices were “Closed.”
- Since 2010, OPM has strongly encouraged agencies to require telework-ready employees to telework on days that Federal offices are closed.
- Since many employee are now required to telework on closure days, OPM believes the pre-approved leave policy has become outdated and does not reflect the new realities of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

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## Employees on Pre-Approved Paid Leave When Federal Offices Are Closed (continued)

- OPM's procedures will no longer advise agencies to cancel an employee's pre-approved paid leave and automatically grant the employee excused absence on a day when Federal offices are closed.
- Employee will be permitted to cancel leave subject to agency policy in accordance with any applicable collective bargaining agreements or requirements (as consistent with law). For example an agency--
  - may allow an employee with a telework agreement to cancel annual leave to perform telework.
  - must cancel sick leave for a medical procedure that was canceled due to the same weather emergency

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# Washington, DC, Area Operating Status Announcements

- OPEN
- OPEN WITH OPTION FOR UNSCHEDULED LEAVE OR UNSCHEDULED TELEWORK
- OPEN – XX HOUR(S) DELAYED ARRIVAL – WITH OPTION FOR UNSCHEDULED LEAVE OR UNSCHEDULED TELEWORK
- OPEN – DELAYED ARRIVAL – EMPLOYEES MUST REPORT TO THEIR OFFICE NO LATER THAN XX:XX – WITH OPTION FOR UNSCHEDULED LEAVE OR UNSCHEDULED TELEWORK



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# Washington, DC, Area Operating Status Announcements (continued)

- OPEN – XX HOUR(S) STAGGERED EARLY DEPARTURE
- OPEN - XX HOUR(S) STAGGERED EARLY DEPARTURE – ALL EMPLOYEES MUST DEPART NO LATER THAN XX: XX AT WHICH TIME FEDERAL OFFICES ARE CLOSED
- IMMEDIATE DEPARTURE – FEDERAL OFFICES ARE CLOSED
- FEDERAL OFFICES ARE CLOSED – EMERGENCY AND TELEWORK-READY EMPLOYEES MUST FOLLOW THEIR AGENCY’ S POLICIES
- SHELTER-IN-PLACE

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# Questions ?

- The updated version of the Procedures is available now at <http://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/reference-materials/handbooks/dcdissmissal.pdf>
- Additional questions concerning the Procedures may be sent via email to [pay-leave-policy@opm.gov](mailto:pay-leave-policy@opm.gov)