



**Multnomah County Health Department's  
Hazardous Conditions and Administrative Closures  
Preparation Procedures  
As of November 28, 2007  
Countywide Procedures with Health Department notations**

**Prior to inclement weather:**

- Identify essential employees. This term is contained within [Personnel Rule 3-15](#).  
**Note:** At this time only Corrections Health employees are designated as essential. More Health Dept. employees may be officially designated as essential.
- Inform these essential employees of their status and responsibilities.
- Refresh and distribute departmental call down lists.
- Remind employees of departmental status notification process. Some departments use call down lists, others use call-in numbers. Be sure they know.

**Notes:**

The Health Dept. will use three methods to communicate with employees:

1. Call down lists (Managers/supervisors are responsible for procedures to connect with all their staff).
  2. Health Dept. Operations Status Hotline - **503-988-6543**. An informational/instructional message addressing any change to operations (due to inclement weather, etc.) will be recorded at this number and updated as needed for Health Dept. employees.
  3. The Health Dept. will update the internet web site with information.  
<http://mchealth.org/> . This information will be put on the internet site as soon as possible but may be delayed. Try the other methods first.
- County Emergency Management will monitor the weather conditions. Department Directors (or their designees) will be notified of pending weather events.

**Upon the onset of inclement weather:**

A Multnomah County Emergency Management planning meeting will be conducted.

**Note:**

- This is a County-wide meeting at which Lillian Shirley or her designee will participate. Lillian will contact Department Leadership Team (DLT). DLT will decide which specific Health Department facilities and offices will be open and the level of service based on the Countywide decisions.
  - DLT will start the call down to managers and supervisors; then managers and supervisors to staff.
- Typically the County Emergency Management Planning meetings will be held at 5:15 am and 4:00 pm. The 4:00 pm session will be used to determine if services will be open the following day
  - In the event that the situation improves or degrades during the evening hours, a decision will be made by 5:30 am and posted to FlashNews ([www.flashnews.net](http://www.flashnews.net)) by the Chair's Office or the Public Affairs Office. This information is accessed by news organizations

throughout the Portland metro area. Departments may access it to update their own phone messages/call down lists.

## **Administrative Closure Messages and Instructions**

When inclement weather or another potential closure is expected on the morning of a business day, every attempt is made to decide about facility closures and schedule changes the evening before. For an unexpected or a less definite situation, every attempt is made to make a decision by 5:30 am. The County's goal is to make the most appropriate decision for our clients and staff based on the available information.

County staff members collect weather-related data from a range of reliable sources. A network of administrators then decides whether any closures or schedule changes will occur, and arranges for that decision to be relayed to each department, the news media and the County's internet site (not the MINT) as soon as possible. Each department has developed its own internal notification procedure. If you are not contacted or have obtained no information, offices will open at their regular starting times. **Essential employees are expected to report for their regular shift in all but the rarest of situations.** Essential employees have been determined by each department or elected official as part of their internal notification process. If you have questions about your department's notification process, check with your supervisor. Employees are expected to make good faith efforts to get to work unless they are specifically told not to report to work.

During bad weather or other emergencies, one of the following messages may be displayed and broadcast. Explanations of these messages are found below.

1. **“Multnomah County services are closed. Essential employees report.”** The County will close public facilities due to the hazardous condition. Pre-defined essential employees are to report to work at their regularly scheduled time.<sup>1</sup>
2. **“All Multnomah County services will open two hours late.”** This means County services will open two hours after their regular starting time. Essential employees are expected to report at their regular time.
3. **Geographic differences. The messages above will be altered to include specific information such as, “All Multnomah County facilities east of Interstate 205.” Or “All Multnomah County facilities west of the Willamette River...”** Facilities will open two hours late or not at all due to geographically specific hazards. Winter weather, for example, occasionally impacts the Gresham area much more severely than downtown Portland. This difference may necessitate the use of such a message.
4. **“Multnomah County facilities and offices open except specifically named buildings or facilities.”** Listed facility will be closed for the public only. All employees report.

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<sup>1</sup> Personnel Rule 3-15-040 states: An employee who is directed by the county or his/her department not to report for work due to facility closure, delayed opening, and/or conditions described in 3-15-010(B) shall be compensated for regularly scheduled hours until such time as the facility or office reopens and/or the employee is reassigned to another work location.

## Multnomah County Personnel Rule 3-15

### INCLEMENT WEATHER AND ADMINISTRATIVE CLOSURES

§§:

**3-15-010 Policy**

**3-15-015 Essential Employees**

**3-15-020 Absences**

**3-15-030 Partial Day Absences**

**3-15-040 Administrative Curtailment Or Closures Of County Facilities**

**3-15-050 Employees with Disabilities**

#### § 3-15-010 POLICY

(A) County employees are expected to make every effort to come to work to serve the public. This rule covers circumstances that may cause unsafe conditions for mobility and transportation and is intended to inform employees of their responsibilities and options during such conditions.

(B) The Chair is responsible for declaring that an event is sufficient to close or curtail county operations, or to allow employees to leave work early, due to situations affecting the health or safety of employees and/or the public, including but not limited to inclement weather, natural or other disasters, the presence of hazardous materials or chemicals, or any other conditions which would pose a clear health or safety risk if normal operations are continued.

(ER 312, Amended, 08/08/2007; ER 288, Amended, 01/06/2005)

#### § 3-15-015 ESSENTIAL EMPLOYEES

The county provides a wide array of services, including many emergency-related functions and other services essential to the public health and safety. The Auditor, District Attorney, the Sheriff, and each Department will develop a procedure for identifying and informing employees who are required to report for duty regardless of decisions to close or curtail other county operations, and shall inform those employees of their designation as essential and the expectations for reporting for duty. Essential employees may be required to present verification for unplanned absences occurring on days when the county has closed or curtailed other operations due to conditions described in 3-15-010(B). Verification includes, but is not limited to, medical verification for sick leave for the employee or a family member, or other independent verification, depending on the reason given, that conditions prevented the employee from reporting for duty as scheduled in order for the absence to be approved.

(ER 288, Added, 01/06/2005)

#### § 3-15-020 ABSENCES

Unless the Chair has declared an event, and except as provided in MCPR 3-15-040, an employee, FLSA exempt or non-exempt, who does not report to work or reports late due to conditions described in 3-15-010(B) shall use appropriate leave as follows:

(A) After notifying a supervisor, an employee may charge any time not worked to:

- (1) Leave without pay;
- (2) Compensatory time off;
- (3) Personal or saved holiday; or
- (4) Vacation leave.

(B) Sick leave may not be used for this purpose.

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### **§ 3-15-030 PARTIAL DAY ABSENCES**

#### **(A) Late Arrivals**

If the Chair declares an event, FLSA non-exempt employees, who attempt to get to work on time but are unavoidably delayed, may arrive up to two hours late without penalty regardless of their scheduled start time. FLSA non-exempt employees who attempt to get to work in such a county declared event, but who are unavoidably delayed, shall not have time charged to one of the categories in MCPR 3-15-020 above unless he or she is two or more hours late, in which event all time late will be charged.

#### **(B) Early Departures**

Managers and supervisors may allow FLSA non-exempt employees who expect to encounter unusual difficulty in getting home to leave early and charge the absence for the remainder of their scheduled shift in accordance with MCPR 3-15-020. All employees who live near their work sites or on well-traveled routes are expected to stay on the job until closing time.

#### **(C) Requests To Adjust Work Hours**

Employees may, at the discretion of their supervisor, be allowed to adjust their work hours within the work week to make up for late arrivals and early departures that would otherwise be charged in accordance with MCPR 3-15-020, provided that no overtime or compensatory time is earned as a result of the adjustment.

(ER 312, Amended, 08/08/2007; ER 288, Amended, 01/06/2005)

### **§ 3-15-040 ADMINISTRATIVE CURTAILMENT OR CLOSURES OF COUNTY FACILITIES**

(A) The Chair, District Attorney, Auditor, Sheriff or Department Director may order an unplanned curtailment of county or department operations or closure of offices or facilities, or reassign employees to other temporary work locations, when conditions, such as those described in 3-15-010(B), that interfere with or prevent normal operations exist. The District Attorney, Auditor, Sheriff, and Department Directors shall make such judgments in consultation with the Chair and appropriate health and safety, emergency management, and/or law enforcement officials, as appropriate, and shall immediately notify all affected employees and the Chair's Office of the decision.

(B) An employee who has reported to work and is directed to leave shall be paid for the remainder of the scheduled shift.

(C) An employee who is directed by the county or his/her department not to report for work due to facility closure, delayed opening, and/or conditions described in 3-15-010(B) shall be compensated for regularly scheduled hours until such time as the facility or office reopens and/or the employee is reassigned to another work location.

(D) An FLSA exempt employee shall not be required to use accrued paid leave or leave without pay for absences when the county or a department closes or curtails operations for periods of less than a full work week.

(E) Employees already in an approved leave status at the time of closure will remain in that leave status.

(ER 312, Amended, 08/08/2007; ER 288, Amended, 01/06/2005)

### **§ 3-15-050 EMPLOYEES WITH DISABILITIES**

Employees who are disabled pursuant to the Americans with Disabilities Act may require reasonable accommodations in order to help such employees get to work during periods of inclement weather or in

the event of a natural disaster. Supervisors will meet with such employees to identify an appropriate manner in which the county may help the employee get to work. Supervisors may seek assistance from the Central HR or County Attorney, if needed, and are encouraged to discuss these plans in advance with any affected bargaining agent.  
(ER 312, Amended, 08/08/2007)



## MCHD Inclement Weather Questions and Answers

**Q1: The County declared an inclement weather event. How will I know whether my work site is opening at the normal time, opening late or closed?**

**A1:** You should be contacted by your supervisor via a call down list. You may also call the Health Department's Operations Status Hotline at **503-988-6543** for the most current information.

**Q2: How will I know whether I have a 2-hour "grace period" to get to work in inclement weather?**

**A2:** The County Chair or the Department Director must declare an inclement weather event or else any time missed will be treated as vacation or other appropriate category. This declaration is the key that unlocks the 2-hour "grace period."

**Q3: My work site is opening later than normal because of a declared inclement weather event. If I arrive at the revised opening time will I be paid for a full work day?**

**A3:** Yes, you will be paid for a full day if you arrive by the revised opening time (usually scheduled for at least 2 hours past the normal opening time).

However, if you arrive after the revised opening time, you will be charged for any time past the revised opening time. The 2-hour "grace period" is the time between normal opening and the revised opening.

**Q4: My work site is opening later than normal because an inclement weather event has been declared. My normal work shift starts before the revised opening time. When should I report to work?**

**A4:** Most employees will report at the revised opening time. However, you may report earlier than the revised opening time *if* you have checked with your manager/supervisor who is responsible to make sure the building is safe and ready for staff and clients for the revised opening time.

**Q5: My work site is opening later than normal because an inclement weather event has been declared. My normal work shift starts after the revised opening time. When should I report to work?**

**A5:** Report at your normal reporting time.

**Q6: How will our clients know whether to come to the clinic or not in bad weather?**

**A6:** Clients may call their clinic or watch/listen for updates on the news.

**Q7: My children's school just closed and I need to stay home to provide daycare. Do I get any special consideration for this?**

**A7:** No, if you miss the day, you will be charged to vacation or other appropriate category.

**Q8: I work in a School-Based Clinic. My school is closed due to inclement weather so I am unable to report to my work site. What should I do?**

**A8:** Contact your manager/supervisor who may direct you to report to another work site. Please check with your manager/supervisor in advance of an inclement weather event to see if you have an alternate assigned work site.

**Q9: I can't get to my work site, but I can get to another work site. Should I report there?**

**A9:** This decision rests with your manager/supervisor. However it is expected that managers will have a plan for employees to work at an alternative site prior to a weather event.

**Q10: May I work from home during inclement weather? I can access my email from my home computer.**

**A10:** Only if your manager/supervisor approves. If not approved, you will be charged vacation or other appropriate category of leave. If your work site is closed or you are unable to get to your work site, your manager/supervisor may direct you to report to another work site.

Can't find the answer to your question? Go to the [Countywide Q&A](#) regarding inclement weather.