



CITY OF PROVIDENCE

9.1 ADVERSE WEATHER POLICY

Purpose

This policy outlines procedures and guidelines for municipality operations during adverse weather conditions to ensure the safety of employees, maintenance of essential services, and minimize disruption to the community. The City of Providence values the safety of its employees and recognizes that some employees have greater distances to travel than others.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees who work for the City of Providence with the exception of sworn Public Safety employees. Only the Mayor, or their designee, or the Chief People Officer, in consultation with senior administration, may declare a level 1 – 3 adverse weather status.

This policy is designed to complement and uphold the provisions outlined in the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA). Any agreements, terms, or conditions specified in the CBA will take precedence and remain in effect in conjunction with this policy. In the event of any conflicts or discrepancies, the CBA shall govern. Employees are encouraged to refer to the CBA for further details on their rights and obligations.

Definitions

Disaster: A type of Emergency that could include an occurrence such as a tornado, storm, flood, high water, wind-driven water, earthquake, drought, blizzard, epidemic, famine, fire, explosion, building collapse, transportation wreck, or other situation that causes human suffering or creates human needs that the victims cannot alleviate without assistance.

Emergency: A situation, or an impending situation caused by the forces of nature, an accident, an intentional act or otherwise that constitutes a danger of major proportions to life or property.

Inclement Weather: Means the existence of abnormal climatic conditions (i.e. blizzard, hail, snow, high winds or any combination thereof) by virtue of which it is not reasonable or safe to travel to or from work.

Essential employee: An essential employee is any person who performs tasks directly or peripherally supportive of the City to provide necessary services during periods of adverse weather, such as positions responsible for snow removal, flood gate management, communications, or any one of the emergency support functions that may be mobilized during such an event. Employees ordered to report for duty by their chief, department director or deputy director during adverse weather conditions will, for the purposes of the weather event in question, be counted as essential staff, even if they are not ordinarily assigned to so-called essential duties. All other employees are non-essential for the purpose of interpreting this policy.

Essential departments: Essential departments are defined as any department which performs tasks directly or peripherally supportive of the City to provide necessary services during periods of adverse weather. These departments could be responsible for services such as snow removal, utilities operations, public works functions, constituent services, or emergency support functions.

Essential departments may have non-essential staff.

Essential departments are:

- Providence Water Supply Board
- Public Safety – Police, Fire, Communications, the Commissioner's Office, and PEMA
- Department of Public Works
- Parks Department
- Mayor's Center for City Services (MCCS) Departments with essential employees (specified roles):



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- Finance Department– Chief, Director, Deputy Director
- Tax Assessor's Office– Director and/or Deputy Director
- Department of Recreation– Director, Deputy Director, and all Recreation Center Directors
- IT– All managers available via remote response
- Department of People and Culture (HR)– Chief, Deputy Chief, HR Directors/Managers
- Tax Collector's Office– Tax Collector, Deputy Collector, or Assistant Collector
- Mayor's Office– Executive staff and appropriate Deputies
- Public Property– Director, Public Property Coordinator, Fleet Manager, and designated facilities staff

Policy

It is the policy of the City to remain open during periods of adverse weather to ensure essential City functions are executed without interruption. Where extraordinary circumstances warrant, the City may choose to invoke one of the following statuses during periods of adverse weather.

1. **Level 1 - Weather Advisory:**

- A. City operations are open
- B. Weather conditions indicate potential disruption.
- C. Essential employees are notified to make preparations to attend work.
- D. All department directors and/or deputy directors are expected to report to work when the City is operating under the Level 1, Adverse Weather Status, regardless if your department is not deemed "essential" as defined above.
- E. Non-essential employees continue normal operations but remain alert for updates.
- F. Any employees that do not report to work must discharge their own accrued time.

2. **Level 2 - Weather Warning:**

- A. City operations are open
- B. Severe weather conditions are expected or occurring.
- C. Essential employees report to work as scheduled unless otherwise directed.
- D. All department directors and/or deputy directors are expected to report to work when the City is operating under the Level 2, Adverse Weather Status, regardless if your department is not deemed "essential" as defined above.
- E. Supervisor will assess the situation and designate which staff in their department are to be deemed essential based on the nature and severity of the storm.
- F. Non-essential employees are instructed to do one of the following:
 1. **Report to work:** work regularly scheduled shift, or until dismissed due to impending weather. (See appendix for examples of delay/dismissal compensation).
 2. **Works remotely** (if practical and authorized by management):
 1. Non-Essential Employees (Remote Capable): Are expected to work off-site for the duration of their regular working hours / schedule (see telecommuting policy). Compensation will be regular pay.
 2. Non-Essential Employees (Not Remote Capable): If non-essential employees do not work upon the activation of a Level 2, Adverse Weather Status, they must discharge accrued time for the day. Employees will need to report their time accordingly.
 3. **Stay home:** Any employee that elects not to report to work or satisfy the requirements, as listed above, must discharge their own accrued time.



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1. Employees who are discharging pre-approved vacation, floating holiday, personal or sick time on the day the City declares a storm closing or upon the activation of a Level 2, Adverse Weather Status, are required to discharge the paid time off as approved. Sick time may not be discharged unless the employee is unable to work due to personal illness or to attend to members of the family within the household whose illness requires the care
3. **Level 3 - Emergency:**
 - A. City operations are open in response to essential operations and emergencies; Additionally, severe weather significantly impacts normal operations.
 - B. Essential employees continue critical services as directed by PEMA.
(Essential employees must report for duty and shall be granted 1.5 additional vacation days to be discharged by the end of the fiscal year.)
 - C. Non-essential employees are not required to report for duty and may not be required to discharge accrued time of any kind.
 1. Employees who are discharging pre-approved vacation, floating holiday, personal or sick time on the day the City declares a storm closing or upon the activation of a Level 3, Adverse Weather Status, are required to discharge the paid time off as approved. Sick time may not be discharged unless the employee is unable to work due to personal illness or to attend to members of the family within the household whose illness requires the care of such employee. Please note that employees may be required to provide medical documentation to substantiate said absence.
 2. All department directors and deputy directors deemed non-essential, should be available by phone if needed.
 - D. In the event a closure extends beyond the first day, the City's Emergency Management Plan and applicable policies will prevail.
 - E. Emergency shelters, evacuation plans, and communication with the public are activated as necessary.
 - F. Public announcement systems and municipality websites are updated with operational changes.

Annexes

1. If an employee chooses not to travel to work, or expects to be late or wishes to leave work early during adverse weather level 1 or level 2 shall:
 - A. Observe standard protocols for reporting absences for the department (see attendance notification policy).
 - B. Employees who miss work for adverse weather are required to use their accrued time (vacation, float time or personal time). Employees who use sick time may have to submit proof of illness.
2. During an adverse weather event, management may schedule and indicate employees necessary for its departments/units in a manner that has regard to safety, travel distance, operational need and employee concerns. This may include alternative work locations, working remotely (if applicable), modified start and end times etc. Supervisors will communicate directly with employees to arrange work modifications.
3. The staffing levels, as defined above, will be made by the Mayor or their designee, and such recommendations are to be made by the Chief People Officer, or their designee.



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4. The decision to close any facility will be made by the Mayor or their designee, taking into consideration storm severity, available forecasts, transportation warnings, accessibility of facilities, and the overall safety of employees, customers and the public.

5. Facility closures will be posted to the City website. All employees are expected to check the City website on adverse weather days. Supervisors are responsible for ensuring their direct reporting staff are notified of closures via phone, text or email.

4. Compliance

Failure to adhere to the requirements outlined in this policy may lead to progressive disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

Related Information:

This policy does not confer a term of employment, nor is the language intended to establish a contract of employment, express or implied, between any employee and the City of Providence. The City of Providence reserves the right to change, amend, terminate any of its policies at any time for any reason.

Appendix:

Compensation FAQ:

Employee arrives late to work due to adverse weather	As stated above, employees are expected to make every attempt to report to and remain at work. If an employee follows the guidelines of this policy and makes a good faith effort in reporting to work, while using discretion about their personal safety and the safety of others, they will not be charged leave for being tardy. If one's tardiness is outside what is determined to be a good faith effort or if one has not followed the guidelines of this policy, absence is charged to vacation, float, personal, or comp time.
Employee does not report to work due to adverse weather	Absence for the full day is charged to vacation, floating holiday, personal, or comp time discharged in hourly increments, excluding non-essential employees in the activation of a Level 3, Adverse Weather Status.
Supervisor approves employee's request to leave early due to adverse weather	The remaining scheduled work hours are charged to vacation, floating holiday, personal, or comp time discharged in hourly increments.
Employee is working from home due to adverse weather.	1. Remote Capable: Expected to work from home if authorized by management (department director, deputy director, chief, and/or deputy chief). Compensation will continue as normal.



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	2. Not Remote Capable: Is not capable to work from home and will have to discharge accrued time for the day. Employees will need to report their time accordingly.
Employee is sent home early by supervisor by the direction of the Mayor or designee due to adverse weather.	Employee is paid for the duration of their entire scheduled workday. There is no charge to leave if, the employee did not call out sick or already have a preapproved event for vacation, float or personal time. (time sheet shows adverse weather- snow day)
There is a delayed opening due to adverse weather by direction of the Mayor.	Employee is paid for delayed time and then as long as they are at work for the regular hours, no charge to employees accruals (time sheet shows adverse weather- snow day for the delayed time)
Employee is unable to leave after their work shift due to adverse weather and, with permission of their supervisor, continues to work..	Employee is paid for all actual hours worked (if non-exempt employee), including overtime if applicable.

Related Forms:

Emergency Response Plan

Related Policies:

- Discipline Policy
- Telecommuting Policy
- Attendance Notification Policy
- Vacation Policy
- Leave of Absence Policy
- Time Clock Policy
- Essential and Emergency Staffing Policy

Other Related Information:

Local 1033 [Collective Bargaining Agreement](#)