



## CITY OF PROVIDENCE

### 9.3 ESSENTIAL AND EMERGENCY STAFFING POLICY

#### Purpose

The purpose of this Essential and Emergency Staffing Policy is to ensure the City of Providence (City) maintains continuity of critical operations and essential public services during emergencies, natural disasters, adverse weather events, or other critical incidents. This policy establishes guidelines for the designation, expectations, and compensation of employees required to report for duty or remain available during such events.

#### Scope

This policy applies to all City employees, including union and non-union staff, full-time, part-time, seasonal, and emergency employees. It provides a consistent framework for identifying and managing essential operations across all City departments, including but not limited to Public Safety, Public Works, Parks, Emergency Management, Finance, and Information Technology.

Public safety personnel (Police, Fire, Telecommunications, and Providence Emergency Management Agency) are inherently designated as essential due to the nature of their work and shall follow their respective departmental directives, labor agreements, and standard operating procedures. The application of this policy as it pertains to public safety personnel shall fall under the purview of the Commissioner of Public Safety and/or the Mayor and is not intended to supersede their established operational standards or obligations.

Nothing in this policy shall supersede, modify, or diminish any rights, benefits, or obligations contained within applicable collective bargaining agreements (CBAs) or laws. In the event of a conflict between this policy and a CBA, the CBA shall prevail for covered employees. For all other employees not covered by a CBA, this policy shall govern.

#### Definitions

**Emergency Event:** A declared state of emergency, adverse weather conditions, public health crisis, or any event that disrupts the normal operation of municipal services as declared by the Mayor, Chief of Staff, and/or Chief Operating Officer, in consultation with Providence Emergency Management Agency (PEMA) and the Emergency Advisory Board (EAB).

**Essential Personnel:** Employees whose duties are critical to the City's ability to maintain core services, ensure public safety, protect property, or support emergency response operations as determined by department directors, as provided below.

**Non-Essential Personnel:** Employees whose duties are not required during an emergency event. These employees may be excused from reporting or may be directed to telework if feasible.

**Public Safety Units:** Departments and divisions, the primary responsibilities of which involve law enforcement, firefighting, emergency medical response, telecommunication and/or emergency management.

#### Policy

The City is committed to sustaining critical municipal operations and ensuring the safety and wellbeing of residents and employees during emergency conditions. Each Department Director shall identify and maintain a list of positions designated as Essential Personnel, reviewed annually and submitted to the Department of People and Culture for recordkeeping.



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### 1. **Designation and Notification**

- A. Department Heads are responsible for designating essential and non-essential roles based on operational necessity.
- B. Each designated employee shall be notified in writing and acknowledge their designation annually or upon appointment.
- C. Temporary designations may be made by Department Heads during declared emergencies to support critical operations.

### 2. **Reporting Requirements**

- A. Essential employees are required to report to work, remain at work, or work remotely (if authorized) during an emergency.
- B. Failure to report without valid justification may result in disciplinary action, subject to the due process rights of the employee and any applicable CBA.
- C. Non-essential employees shall follow reporting instructions issued by the City during closure or delayed operations.

### 3. **Compensation and Work Conditions**

- A. Essential employees shall be compensated in accordance with applicable CBAs, City ordinances, or personnel policies.
- B. Compensation includes overtime for non-exempt employees, stipends not exceeding one and a half times the base rate for exempt employees, and overtime or compensatory time for union personnel, consistent with FLSA provisions, City standards, and state law.
- C. When extended operations are required, departments should, where practicable, provide meals, lodging, or transportation assistance for essential staff.

### 4. **Telework Provisions**

Telework may be authorized in conjunction and compliance with the Adverse Weather Policy and the Telecommuting / Remote Work Policy.

### 5. **Safety and Wellness**

- A. Departments must provide adequate personal protective equipment (PPE), rest periods, and support to staff deployed during emergencies.
- B. Employees experiencing personal hardship or health limitations should communicate promptly with their supervisor for consideration of alternative work assignments.

### 6. **Public Safety Personnel**

- A. Public Safety Departments (Police, Fire, Telecommunications, and PEMA) operate under operational mandates as overseen by the Commissioner of Public Safety and/or the Mayor and CBAs which inherently define their essential functions, operations, and employment conditions. Those instruments govern employee attendance, duty assignments, and compensation during emergencies.

### 7. **Communication and Activation**

- A. The Mayor or Chief Operating Officer, in consultation with the Emergency Advisory Board (EAB) and Providence Emergency Management Agency (PEMA), will declare official operating status levels (e.g., Open, Delayed, Closed, Essential Only).



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- B. Notifications will be issued through official City communication channels, including email, text alerts, and media announcements.
- C. Department Heads are responsible for relaying status updates and attendance directives to all staff.

### **Related Policies**

Adverse Weather Policy

Emergency Response Guide – PEMA

Adverse Public Health Events Policy