

Inclement Weather Policy



Effective Date: 11/14/2023

POLICY SCOPE:

The Town of Stow recognizes New England weather can be unpredictable with conditions changing rapidly. In general, Town operations are not usually affected by environmental factors and offices are usually open and fully operational on regular workdays. However, at times severe weather can disrupt operations. When weather conditions are uncertain, the Town Administrator will monitor the situation and evaluate whether closing Town offices is warranted and will provide guidance to employees as soon as possible.

APPLICABILITY:

This policy applies to all full and part-time employees of the Town of Stow. Employees governed by a collective bargaining agreement are subject only to those provisions of this policy not specifically regulated by law or agreement.

DEFINITIONS:

Inclement/Adverse Weather – Weather conditions that can make travel in and around the Town limits of Stow hazardous for the employee or weather that may endanger the public, including weather causing major disruption to transportation and the operation of businesses and schools. Some examples of inclement weather include hurricanes, floods, blizzards, heavy snow and ice storms, and excessive heat.

Critical Need Employees – An employee whose job functions require that he/she be at work during normally scheduled work hours (regardless of environmental factors) to provide essential service to the public or provide direct leadership or support. These are departments that typically operate on a 24-hour a day rotating schedule, or play a critical role in maintaining the safety and services to the Town.

Secondary Employees – Made up of both non-exempt and exempt personnel who are not classified as a critical need employee and are typically considered working in an administrative or in non-public safety function.

Critical Need Departments and Functions:

Fire Department – All public safety personnel are designated as Critical Need employees. Civilian personnel may be designated by the Fire Chief as either Critical Need or secondary based on support needed for the fire department to remain functional.

Police Department – All sworn/public safety personnel and public safety dispatchers are designated as Critical Need employees. Sworn administrative personnel may be assigned to patrol functions or other

duties to assist with maintaining traffic control or public safety. Civilian personnel may be designated by the Chief of Police as either critical need or secondary, based on support needed for the police department to remain functional.

Public Works – All are assigned and expected to report to work as part of the response team based on the type of adverse weather forecasted.

Information Technology Services Department – Information Technology Services are designated as critical need to ensure that communication equipment and other technology equipment remains functional. The Information Technology Services Director may determine if services could be maintained via remote or on-site monitoring.

POLICY DESCRIPTION:

In the event of inclement weather conditions, unless otherwise notified by the Town Administrator or authorized designee, employees are to consider Town offices open and operating during normally scheduled business hours. Employees should prepare for winter weather by:

- Ensuring their personal vehicle is safe or finding alternate sources of travel such as public transportation, arranging carpools or other alternate means of transportation.
- Anticipating weather conditions and weatherize automobiles accordingly.
- Prepare for winter weather, identify work files or documents to work on remotely.
- Making every attempt to report to and remain at work when Town offices are open. It is not the intent of this policy, however, to suggest that employees should risk danger or possible injury to person or employee property in order to travel to and from work. Not all employees live locally, not all personal employee vehicles are equipped for all weather conditions, and not all employees are comfortable driving in various weather conditions. At times, employees may decide to use accrued time and not report to Town offices

In the event inclement weather conditions hamper or prevent travel, the following compensation guidelines will apply to all full-time regular employees and (regular) part-time employees with the understanding that said employees shall be compensated only for regularly scheduled work hours on the given day.

PROCEDURE:

- The Town Administrator or designee has the responsibility for making the determination regarding closure or delay of opening Town buildings/facilities no later than **two (2) hours** before the facility is scheduled to open to allow sufficient time for notifications. In making such determination both the continuance of service to the public and the safety of employees will be taken into consideration.
- If the Town buildings/facilities will be closed for an entire day, the Town Administrator or designee will email all employees, notify media and post an alert on the Town's webpage one and one half hours (1.5 hours) before a building/facility is scheduled to open.

Compensation:

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 or personal leave, comp time (with employee permission) or unpaid leave if no appropriate accrued leave is available.
Employee does not report to work due to adverse weather	Absence for the full day is charged to vacation or personal leave, comp time or unpaid leave if no appropriate accrued leave is available for the number of hours of scheduled work for the day.
Supervisor approves employee's request to leave early due to adverse weather	Remaining scheduled work hours are charged to vacation leave, comp time (with employee permission) or unpaid leave if no appropriate accrued leave is available.
Employee is sent home early by supervisor at the direction of the Town Administrator or designee due to adverse weather	Employee is paid for the entire scheduled workday. There is no charge to leave if, you are at work and the building closes (time sheet shows inclement weather.)
Town offices are closed or there is a delayed opening due to adverse weather at the direction of the Town Administrator	Employee is paid for entire scheduled work day, no charge to leave accrual (time sheet shows inclement weather.)
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, including overtime if applicable. At the discretion of the employee's supervisor, the employee may be allowed to flex within the same pay period and report late or leave early from work on a subsequent day to make up for the additional hours worked.

Note:

- 1. An employee who has previously scheduled, submitted, and been approved for paid leave prior to an inclement weather event, will have their absence charged against the originally approved leave accrual.***
- 2. In all cases where the Supervisor approves and the employee can work remotely, the employee will be paid and no accrued time will be charged.***