



Atlanta Federal Executive Board

FY 2016

UNIFORM SEVERE WEATHER, EMERGENCY ALERT AND EARLY DISMISSAL PLAN

June 2016

*Atlanta Federal Executive Board
75 Spring ST SW Suite 1142
Telephone Number: [404] 331-4400
Website: <https://www.atlanta.feb.gov>*

(The plan contains sensitive telephone numbers and is not being distributed beyond Agency Leadership.)

I. Introduction

This plan covers Federal employees in the Atlanta Federal Executive Board's area of coverage. The plan does not include U. S. Postal Service employees or employees designated by their agency as emergency employees or mission-critical employees.

Federal Register, Vol. 49, No. 169, pages 34193-34195 provides the regulatory authority for the Uniform Weather Emergency Alert and Dismissal Plan. Notification of any emergency situation generated under this plan is **Advisory Only**. The final decision regarding the dismissal of employees reside with each individual agency or installation head. Each agency, is, however, encouraged to avoid independent action and is requested to follow the plan in order to present a uniform government policy and to discourage disparities between agencies, therefore allowing affected employees to be treated as consistently as possible. Each agency should also establish agency unique policy and procedures for implementation of the plan and actions to be taken upon notification of an emergency situation.

II. Authority

The authority for this plan is the executive order given by the President upon establishment of the Federal Executive Boards and Federal Regulation 5 CFR Part 960 as published in the Federal Register, Vol. 49, No. 169, pp. 34193-34195. The executive order includes the charge to consider common management and program problems and develop cooperative arrangements that promote the general public service objectives of the Government agencies in a local area. The plan outlined here is consistent with the Office of Personnel Management's (OPM) Emergency Dismissal and Closure Procedures for the Washington, D.C. area.

III. Communication

The Atlanta Federal Executive Board (FEB) will communicate the advisory decision to designated Agency leadership. The message will be reported to agencies in two ways: We will utilize the FEB hotline to post messages. We will also communicate with agencies via the Communicator! NXT network which will provide an email message. The FEB Office will use the Communicator! NXT network automated calling system to provide a telephone message notification. The FEB hotline number is **404-331-3161**. Designated agency officials should check this number for up-to-date messaging. **This number should not be released to agency employees for checking. The system cannot handle that volume of calls. Do not leave any messages at this number as they will not be returned.** It is the responsibility of each agency to inform their agency employees. The designated persons to be notified will be based upon the agency information furnished to the FEB in previous Emergency Notification Request information.

If your agency did not respond to previous requests for notification information, your agency may not receive correct or timely notification. It is critical that your agency contact the FEB as soon as possible with the name and contact information of your agency leader and/or contact information for the designated alternative. You may reach the FEB Office at AtlantaFEB@gsa.gov. You may also call the FEB Office at 404-331-4400.

We will not rely on media contacts to communicate to employees because the information has not always been reported timely or accurately and Agencies have a variety of alternative work schedules which make standard media messages confusing.

IV. Telework-Ready Employees

OPM has previously stressed the importance of making Telework a standard part of all agency emergency planning to ensure the Federal Government continues to carry out its essential functions, and the Telework Enhancement Act of 2010 requires agencies to integrate Telework into their COOP plans. Employees' Telework agreements should spell out whether the employee is expected to work from home or an alternative site on days that they are regularly scheduled to Telework when the Federal Government has announced unscheduled leave/unscheduled Telework, delayed arrival, early departure, or Federal offices are closed. OPM advises agencies to review their current Telework policies regularly and establish policies regarding who is required to work when under these dismissal and closure procedures.

Further, under OPM's policy for unscheduled Telework, agencies have the opportunity to increase the use of Telework when establishing new Telework policies, and should consider modifying or renegotiating current Telework policies to require any employee with a Telework agreement to work on a day when the Government declares emergency dismissal and closure procedures irrespective of whether that employee was previously scheduled to Telework. In essence, all employees with Telework agreements could potentially be required by their agencies to Telework on a day when Federal offices are closed, and be expected to work from home or at an alternative location (e.g., home or Telework center). Any requirement that Telework employees continue to work if Federal offices are closed to the public (or during delayed arrivals and early dismissals) on his or her Telework day or on any of his or her regularly scheduled workdays are subject to collective bargaining and should be included explicitly in the agency's Telework policy and the employee's written Telework agreement.

OPM strongly encourages agencies to maintain a viable Telework-ready workforce. This requires practice and testing equipment and procedures regularly throughout the year, not just Teleworking during emergencies. Thus, all Telework employees should have the opportunity or be required to Telework regularly throughout the year. This will help ensure that all Telework employees will be effective and efficient on a day when Federal offices are closed.

As permitted by their agency's policies, procedures, and collective bargaining agreements, non-emergency Telework employees must notify their supervisor of their intent to use unscheduled leave or unscheduled Telework. When the Federal Government announces late arrival or early dismissal procedures are in effect, Telework employees may also request appropriate leave, earned compensatory time off, credit hours (if permitted) or reschedule their alternative work schedule (AWS) day off when additional time off is needed. Agencies may also consider exercising their authority to provide excused absence to Telework employees on a case-by case basis (e.g., electricity, infrastructure/connectivity issues, childcare or eldercare issues) when they are required to work when Federal offices are closed.

V. Determining That Emergency Conditions Exist

For the purpose of these guidelines, an emergency condition is one that may prevent a significant number of employees from reporting to work, or may necessitate the curtailment of Federal activities either in whole or in part.

Emergency conditions must be of a general nature, with broad scope and impact, rather than individualized or personal situations. Hurricanes, floods, tornadoes, or other disasters may cause the emergency. In such conditions, while the health and safety of employees are matters of concern to the Government, that concern must be balanced with the critical need to maintain service to the public.

The evaluation of existing and projected emergency conditions is usually done in a short time span. Resulting decisions must be communicated to a widely scattered work force promptly, effectively, and in unambiguous language. Therefore, when existing or projected emergency conditions warrant, the FEB Emergency Team members will begin observations and initiate consultations with appropriate public and private agencies to determine the possible impact of such emergency conditions on work schedules; and then communicate the determination in accordance with provisions of the Plan. For example, when the emergency involves adverse weather that may affect office-opening schedules, observation of weather and road conditions will begin by 4:00 a.m. and will include gathering information from the following sources:

1. The Meteorologist-in-Charge of the National Weather Service for projections, forecasts, and weather conditions in the Metro Atlanta counties.
2. County Emergency Management Offices to obtain information on road conditions, school closings, and public transportation conditions.
3. The GA Department of Transportation and local Law Enforcement Agencies.
4. The FEB Emergency Team members will consult with appropriate municipal and regional officials before determining an advisory decision on operating status. The FEB Emergency Team will meet via conference call to discuss all conditions and options. The Team will then make an advisory recommendation regarding Federal operations. This decision is based on the need to keep operations functioning as normal as possible and concern for the safety of Federal employees.

VI. Hazardous Weather Develops During Non-Duty Hours

The FEB Emergency Team, consisting of the FEB Chair, the FEB Executive Director, FEMA representative, GSA representative, Group Manager of OPM Agency Compliance & Evaluation, and representatives from FPS, Fulton County Office of Emergency Management, the Occupant Emergency Coordinator from the Sam Nunn Atlanta Federal Center, and other preselected board members will convene an early morning conference call, having consulted with the National Weather Service, the Georgia Department of Transportation, and law enforcement to assess the weather and road conditions. The FEB Chair will make a decision with input from the committee members regarding the advisory decision under this Plan. The FEB Executive Director will then post the decision to the FEB Emergency Hotline, implement the Communicator! NXT automated messaging system. This Advisory will be posted at the earliest possible time but no later than by 5:30 a.m. It is then the responsibility of each agency's executive leadership or his/her designee to

call the Hotline for the advisory decision or to communicate the information from the Communicator! NXT automated notification system to notify his or her agency employees.

Each agency is encouraged to make use of telephone cascades, emergency hotlines, emails, or other appropriate methods of notification of your employees.

BASED ON OPM GUIDANCE ON DISMISSAL AND CLOSURE PROCEDURES FOR FEDERAL OFFICES, THE FOLLOWING OPERATING STATUS ANNOUNCEMENTS WILL BE USED:

- A. OPEN
- B. OPEN WITH OPTION FOR UNSCHEDULED LEAVE OR UNSCHEDULED TELEWORK
- C. OPEN –XX HOURS(S) DELAYED ARRIVAL- WITH OPTION FOR UNSCHEDULED LEAVE OR UNSCHEDULED TELEWORK
- D. OPEN-DELAYED ARRIVAL-EMPLOYEES MUST REPORT TO THEIR OFFICE NO LATER THAN XX:XX - WITH OPTION FOR UNSCHEDULED LEAVE OR UNSCHEDULED TELEWORK
- E. OPEN-XX-HOURS(S)STAGGERED EARLY DEPARTURE
- F. OPEN-XX HOURS(S) STAGGERED EARLY DEPARTURE-ALL EMPLOYEES MUST DEPART NO LATER THAN XX:XX AT WHICH TIME FEDERAL OFFICES ARE CLOSED.
- G. IMMEDIATE DEPARTURE-FEDERAL OFFICES ARE CLOSED
- H. FEDERAL OFFICES ARE CLOSED-EMERGENCY AND TELEWORK-READY EMPLOYEES MUST FOLLOW THEIR AGENCY’S POLICIES
- I. SHELTER –IN-PLACE

The following exception is based on individual Agency Policy: BASED ON INDIVIDUAL AGENCY POLICY, EMPLOYEES MAY BE REQUIRED TO PERFORM UNSCHEDULED TELEWORK, REQUEST LEAVE, OR A COMBINATION OF BOTH.

Employees who are on official travel on a workday when his or her agency is closed or there is implementation of a delayed or early closing is expected to continue working, but should check with their agency on specific policy and guidelines regarding their situation. If the travel assignment requires frequent contact with the home agency, an excused absence may be appropriate. The agency is responsible for determining whether an employee is required to continue working or will be granted excused absence under these circumstances.

An employee who is on leave does not receive an excused absence when an agency is closed. These employees should remain in their current status. An employee in a nonpay status has no expectation of working and receiving pay for a day which the agency is closed and is therefore not entitled to be paid for his or her absence. However, the employee should check with their agency on specific policy and guidelines regarding their situation.

Agencies should follow their already established rules for employees on an alternative work schedule (AWS), telework or employees who telework from a remote location. Agencies may use the guidance in OPM's *Handbook on Alternative Work Schedules* (see information on "Excused Absence" in the "Flexible Work Schedules" section) to determine the "normal arrival and departure times" of employees on flexible schedules. The handbook is available on OPM's Website at <http://www.opm.gov/oca/aws/index.htm>.

Employees who have been designated as emergency employees and mission-critical emergency employees are expected to report for work on time unless otherwise directed by their agencies.

VII. Extended Emergency Situations

In any emergency situation, Government operations may be disrupted for extended periods. OPM has provided numerous resources to enable Federal agencies to continue functioning effectively during an emergency situation. This information is available at <https://www.chcoc.gov/content/human-resources-flexibilities-severe-weather-natural-disaster-and-other-emergency-situatio-1>. In addition, the following fact sheets and *Handbook*, available on OPM's website, offer further guidance on continuing operations during extended emergencies:

- **OPM, Washington DC, Area Dismissal and Closure Procedures**
<http://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/reference-materials/handbooks/dcdismisal.pdf>
- **Emergency Situations That Restrict Employees To Their Agency's Premises ("Shelter in Place")**
<http://www.opm.gov/oca/compmemo/2003/ShelterInPlace.asp>
- **Human Resources Flexibilities and Authorities in the Federal Government (August 2013)**
<https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/reference-materials/handbooks/humanresourcesflexibilitiesauthorities.pdf>
- **Handbook on Pay and Leave Benefits For Federal Employees Affected By Severe Weather Emergencies or Other Emergency Situations (June 2008)**
<https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/reference-materials/handbooks/emergencybenefits.pdf>
- **Telework Guidance**
<https://www.telework.gov/>