

# Inclement Weather FAQs

Below are answers to frequently asked questions regarding the county's inclement weather policy as outlined in [Personnel Rule 3-15](#). Employees who need additional information should contact their department HR unit.

**Important:** Prior to winter inclement weather possibilities, review and remind employees of their call-in procedures responsibilities. It is important that any communication tree and/or department communication process are clearly communicated to employees and any possible glitches are reviewed and corrected prior to possible weather events.

## Quick Links

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### A. Inclement Weather Decisions and Communications

**Q1:** Who is responsible for declaring an inclement weather event?

**A1:** Only the chair or, in the Chair's absence, the chief operating officer or chief of staff as the designee may declare an inclement weather event. Declaration of an inclement weather event activates the two (2) hour grace period provided for in county personnel rules and most labor agreements.

As an alternative to declaring an inclement weather event and activating the two hour grace period, the chair may elect to curtail or close county operations. If county operations are curtailed, for example, a delayed opening time, employees are expected to report at the delayed opening time and the two (2) hour grace period does not apply.

**Q2:** Who is responsible for determining when to close or curtail county operations?

**A2:** The chair is responsible for determining when to close or curtail county operations due to situations affecting the health or safety of employees and/or the public. Department Directors and Elected Officials are responsible for making those decisions at the department level.

**Q3:** How are County operation decisions made during inclement weather?

**A3:** County staff members collect weather related data from a range of reliable sources. A network of administrators then makes a recommendation to the chair, department directors, and elected officials on whether any closures or schedule changes will occur.

**Q4:** When are inclement weather decisions made?

**A4:** The County's goal is to make the most appropriate decision for our clients and staff based on available information. When closure or curtailment of operations due to weather 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 a.m. Weather and road conditions will be monitored throughout workdays to determine whether the county needs to curtail operations.

**Q5:** If a decision is made to close or curtail county operations, how will I know whether my work site is opening late or closed?

**A5:** If the Chair's Office makes a decision to close or curtail county operations, the decision is relayed to the departments, the news media, and the county's website.

Each department is required to inform affected employees immediately of revised opening times or office closures, by phone tree and/or posting such information on the department web site.

**Q6:** It is snowing where I live, but I have not seen any communication stating that the chair has declared an inclement weather event or my department director has closed or curtailed operations. Should I report to my work site at the normal time?

**A6:** It is the policy of the County that employees are expected to make every effort to come to work on time to serve the public.

- If you are not contacted or have obtained no information regarding closure or curtailment of county operations, offices will open at their regular starting times and all employees are expected to report to work on time.
- If an inclement weather event has been declared by the chair, then offices will open at the normal time and employees will be allowed up to two (2) hours grace period to report to work.
- If the county has announced a revised or delayed opening time, then employees are expected to report to work at the new designated opening time and no grace period is allowed.
- If a closure is announced, only essential employees are expected to report to work.

**Q7:** If the County's website says the County buildings will not open until 10:00 a.m. due to snow, does this mean that the "Inclement Weather" policies are in effect as per Article 10 of the Local 88 contract?

**A7:** The County did not declare an "inclement weather event" as that term is used in MCPR 3-15. Therefore the two (2) hour grace period did not apply nor did employee discretion to use paid or unpaid leave.

The County made an administrative decision to delay opening of County buildings to the public. Essential employees are expected to report to work on time. Non-

essential employees are expected to report at 10:00 a.m. unless directed otherwise. Employees who work a regular 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. schedule would receive two (2) hours administrative leave (AL01) and six (6) hours regular time (8000).

## **B. Essential Employees**

**Q1:** What does it mean to be designated as an essential employee?

**A1:** Essential employees are expected to report for duty on time and remain at work until the end of their scheduled shift even if an inclement weather event is declared.

**Q2:** How do I know if I have been designated an essential employee?

**A2:** Each department has a procedure for identifying and informing essential employees who are required to report regardless of the closure or curtailment of county operations. Essential employees should know their essential status prior to an inclement weather event. Employees should ask their supervisors if they are unsure of their status.

**Q3:** What happens if I am designated as an essential employee, but I do not come to work during an inclement weather event?

**A3:** Essential personnel who do not report and have an unplanned absence may be asked to provide verification to explain the reason for not reporting and could be subject to discipline.

**Q4:** I am designated as an essential employee, but I am unable to arrive at work by my designated starting time during a declared inclement weather event. Employees are told they have a two (2) hour grace period to arrive to work. Do I get the same two (2) hour grace period even though I am an essential employee?

**A4:** Yes, although essential employees are expected to arrive by their designated start time, they receive the two (2) hour grace period if they are unavoidably delayed.

**Q5:** Can essential employees be assigned duties outside of their normal responsibilities?

**A5:** Yes, essential employees can be assigned other duties and/or directed to report to a different site.

**Q6:** Can essential employees work from home?

**A6:** Yes, with their supervisor's permission and if their essential duties can be performed from home.

## **C. Arrival and Departure Times During an Inclement Weather Event**

**Q1:** How will I know whether I have a two (2) hour grace period to get to work in inclement weather?

**A1:** The chair must declare an inclement weather event or else any time missed will be treated as vacation or other appropriate paid leave category. If the chair has declared an inclement weather event, employees will be informed through announcements to the media and on the county website.

If an inclement weather event has been declared, county offices will open at their normal times and employees are expected to make every effort to report to work on time; however, in a declared inclement weather event, employees will be allowed up to two (2) hours to report to work without having to take leave.

**Q2:** What if an inclement weather event is declared and there is a two (2) hour grace period for employees to arrive, but I can not make it to work within that time frame?

**A2:** If you arrive later than two (2) hours or do not come to work, all of your late/non-work time is charged to vacation, leave without pay, or other appropriate paid leave category.

For example, if your scheduled start time is 8:00 a.m., but you are unable to arrive until 11:00 a.m., you must charge three (3) hours to an appropriate leave category.

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

**A3:** You will be paid for a full day if you arrive by the revised opening time.

**Q4:** My work site is opening later than normal because of weather. My normal work shift starts before the revised opening time. When should I report to work?

**A4:** Employees will normally report at the revised opening time. However, you may report earlier than the revised opening time if you have approval from your manager/supervisor and the building is safe and ready for staff prior to the revised opening time.

**Q5:** My work site is opening later than normal because of weather. My normal work shift starts after the revised opening time. When should I report to work?

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

**Q6:** The County has announced that operations will be curtailed, and county offices will open two (2) hours later than normal. Employees are directed to report to work at the revised opening time. My children's school just closed, and I need to stay home to provide daycare. Do I get any special consideration for this during inclement weather events?

**A6:** No, if you miss the day, your time will be charged to vacation or other appropriate category.

**Q7:** What if I am told by my supervisor to not come to work because the facility I work at is closed and there are no safe alternative work sites for me to be reassigned to?

**A7:** An employee who is directed by the county or his/her department not to report for work due to facility closure or other conditions 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.

**Q8:** The County's operations are curtailed, so that employees can leave two (2) hours early at 3:00 pm. I am a represented employee and left at 2:00 p.m., before the inclement weather decision was made, because the roads were reported to be hazardous in my neighborhood. Do I get paid for the two (2) hours that the county's operations were curtailed?

**A8:** You are considered to be in leave status prior to the time the inclement weather event is declared, so you must use vacation or some other appropriate paid leave category for the entire absence in order to be paid for the full day.

**Q9:** If the county does not declare an inclement weather event and states buildings are opening at 10:00 a.m., but the department says some employees need to arrive by 9:00 a.m.; do such employees get the administrative leave from 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 am if they don't arrive until 10:00 a.m.? Or does the department directive override what the county has stated?

**A9:** Employees who were directed to arrive by 9:00 a.m. but did not arrive until 10:00 a.m., who work a regular 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. schedule would receive one hour administrative leave (AL01) for 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m., be charged paid leave (vacation, comp, saved holiday) from 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. and earn six (6) hours of regular time (8000).

Employees are responsible for following the call in procedure prescribed by their department. Department directive overrides what the county states on the radio, TV or county web page, as those messages are generally geared toward the public as customers.

In the event of delayed openings, departments have a right to determine who among non-essential employees needs to arrive at their normal reporting time. The county may announce a building is opening to the public at 10:00 a.m., but the department can direct employees to arrive at 9:00 a.m. to prepare the building for the public.

**Q10:** What if a department has a technical problem when putting a message on the inclement weather phone number? For example, on the morning of the snow event it was 6:30 a.m. by time the late opening message was implemented and due to the delay in notifying employees of the delayed opening, some employees arrived at their normal 8:00 a.m. starting time. Can they leave early since others get a free two (2) hours off?

**A10:** Employees who arrived at their normal start time need to work their regular shift. Because a department was unable to update their inclement weather phone number is not a justified reason for employees to leave early.

## **D. Working from Home and Reporting to Alternative Work Sites**

**Q1:** May I work from home during inclement weather if I can access email and/or other county work from my home computer?

**A1:** Only if your manager/supervisor approves.

**Q2:** I can't get to my work site, but I can get to another work site. Should I report there?

**A2:** 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, or may approve your request to report to another work site if you can perform your duties at an alternative site.

**Q3:** I work in a school-based position. My school is closed due to inclement weather, so I am unable to report to my work site. What should I do?

**A3:** Contact your manager/supervisor who may direct you to report to another work site. If there is no work available to you, then you will be paid for all of your regular scheduled hours.

**Q4:** If the county is entirely shut down due to (more extreme) winter weather, am I expected to work if the event falls on my telework day?

**A4:** Yes, telework employees are expected to work their normal shift, unless they are unable to perform their duties and have received permission to take administrative leave.

**Q5:** Are telework employees entitled to administrative leave if there is a two (2) hour delayed opening of county buildings due to inclement weather?

**A5:** Telework employees are not entitled to the two (2) hours administrative leave granted to employees who report to a county building. Telework employees are expected to work their normal hours unless they are unable to perform their duties and have received permission to take administrative leave.

## **E. Timekeeping**

**Q1:** What are the possible time codes that can be used during an inclement weather event?

<b>A1:</b>	Regular Pay (8000)	Personal Holiday (PH01)
	Administrative Leave (AL01)	Unpaid Leave (UL01)
	Comp Time Taken (CS01)	Vacation Leave (VA01)

**Q2:** Operations were curtailed and non-essential employees who were at work were allowed to leave early. How do I record my time?

**A2(a):** Non-exempt FLSA Employee (meaning can accrue overtime) - If you left at the time or after offices were closed, the time for your remaining shift should be

coded as administrative leave (AL01). If you left before offices were closed, you must use vacation or some other appropriate paid leave time for all hours of your remaining shift.

**A2(b):** Management Employee - Management employees who are exempt from overtime and worked any part of the day do not have to use leave time.

**Q3:** An inclement weather event was declared and employees were given a two (2) hour grace period to arrive to work. How should I code that two (2) hours of time?

**A3:** If you arrived within this two (2) hour grace period, you should code the time as administrative leave (AL01). If you were two (2) or more hours late, you must use accrued leave time or unpaid leave (UL01), at your discretion, for the entire period.

**Q4:** I was already on an approved leave when an inclement weather event was declared. How should I code my timesheet?

**A4:** Employees who are already in an approved leave status will remain in that status and cannot change their time to administrative leave (AL01).

**Q5:** What if an inclement weather event is not declared, or county operations are not curtailed or closed, but an employee is late, leaves early, or misses a full day of work due to concerns about road conditions?

**A5:** Managers and supervisors may allow FLSA non-exempt employees who encounter unusual difficulty in their commute to charge their non-worked time to vacation (VA01), comp time taken (CS01), personal holiday (PH01) or unpaid leave (UL01).

**Q6:** I am a timekeeper. Should I do anything special when I am entering time?

**A6:** Yes, you should include a text note stating "inclement weather" for any time coded as administrative leave (AL01) or unpaid leave (UL01).

**Q7:** How do shift premiums relate during inclement weather events?

**A7:** If an employee has shift differential built into their schedule then the premium will pay on all paid time. If the shift differential is not built into their schedule, but they were scheduled to work a shift eligible for the premium, only actual time worked should be coded with the premium.

**Q8:** For those staff who, for various reasons, did not get the message that the county was opening at 10:00 am, and they arrived at their work location at their usual work start time, how will they be coding their time?

**A8:** Employees who did not get the message to report at 10:00 a.m. and arrived at their normal report time need to code their time as regular time (8000).

Employees who arrived at their normal start time need to work their entire regular shift; early arrival does not create administrative leave (AL01) time for use at the end of the day or on another day.

**Q9:** Can I use my administrative leave (AL01) at another time?

**A9:** No. The administrative leave (AL01) must be used on the day of the inclement weather during the designated time of the curtailment of operations.

**Q10:** Do we have a policy regarding on-call employees and whether they receive administrative leave (AL01) pay during inclement weather issues?

**A10:** On-call employees are not entitled to paid administrative leave; they should only be paid for actual hours worked. On-call employees are not guaranteed hours of work, therefore if their work day is delayed or cut short due to a weather event they do not get paid for that time.

**Q11:** Do we have a policy regarding temporary employees and if they receive administrative leave (AL01) pay during inclement weather situations?

**A11(a):** Hourly temporary employees are not entitled to administrative leave (AL01); they should only be paid for actual hours worked.

**A11(b):** Salaried temporary employees should be treated the same as regular salaried employees; if regular salaried employees receive administrative leave (AL01), then temporary salaried employees should likewise.

**Q12:** An employee arrives at 11:30 a.m., 1.5 hours after the revised 10:00 a.m. start time. A supervisor told the employee that since she did not come in by 10:00 a.m. she would not get any administrative leave and would have to make up all the time by flexing or using her leave time.

The employee didn't want to use her leave time so she came in the next day (her normal day off) and worked to make up the hours.

When a memo went out about how to code the time she learned that she could have received administrative leave (AL01) for the hours before 10:00 a.m. and used leave time for the hours after. She was given the wrong information by her supervisor.

Now she wants to know if she can code the administrative leave (AL01) and get overtime for the extra hours on the next day.

**A12:** The supervisor incorrectly told the employee that she would be charged paid leave for all hours before 11:30 a.m. The employee's time needs to be corrected. Assuming that the employee's normal work schedule starts at 8:00 a.m.; the 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. period should have been coded as administrative leave (AL01).

Because the employee didn't arrive until 11:30 a.m.; 10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. should be charged paid leave. Whereas the employee worked additional hours the next day, on the employee's scheduled day off, they would be entitled to overtime worked.