

NOTICE

No. 11-08

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ANNOUNCEMENT, PREPARATION, STAFFING, AND COMPENSATION DURING M-NCPPC CLOSINGS AND EMERGENCIES

This Notice provides guidance on the handling of emergency closings/delays/liberal leave decisions during weather and other situations. This Notice combines and consolidates Notice 11-08, Preparation, Staffing, and Compensation During Emergency Conditions and Notice 16-03 Announcement of M-NCPPC Closings in Snow and Emergencies. It also addresses areas related to emergency preparedness. Components covered are:

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I. Announcement of Facility/Office Closings and Liberal Leave Status

M-NCPPC generally follows the decisions of Montgomery and Prince George’s County Governments in announcing closings and delays related to snow and weather-related emergencies. Employees should refer to local broadcasts for information based on the County in which their facility/office is located. Therefore, if the County Government announces an all-day closing, M-NCPPC facilities/offices in that county will be closed.

Similarly, if Liberal Leave is declared, Merit System employees assigned to a work location in that County may take their own leave without prior supervisory approval. Staff located in the bi-County Central Administrative Services offices should observe general information on closing and delays for the county in which their office is located. Depending on the seriousness and extent of conditions affecting our operations, the M-NCPPC may find it necessary to declare decisions which are separate from County decisions.

For all agency-wide or county-wide closing and delays, M-NCPPC will announce emergency decisions through:

- The M-NCPPC website: <http://www.mncppc.org>.
- The M-NCPPC emergency message line on 301-454-1454.
- Broadcast emails sent to employees' M-NCPPC email addresses.

The following radio and television stations also provide information on County decisions:

<u>Radio Stations</u>	<u>Television</u>
WMAL (630 AM); WTOP (103.5 FM)	Local Channels 4, 5, 7, 8 and 9

A. Announcements of Emergency Status after Normal Operations Have Commenced

At times, it may become necessary to declare an emergency closing or Liberal Leave status. In such cases, the closing is declared by the authority designated in Section II, titled "Authority to Declare Commission Emergencies and Liberal Leave". These decisions may be based on weather or other types of emergency conditions and may affect one or more facilities within the agency. Agency-wide and County-wide closings will be announced through M-NCPPC communication protocols.

If closings are localized to specific facilities, the Department Head will provide this notification to their employees. Upon declaration of the emergency, the Department Head shall ensure that covered facilities are notified of the local emergency closing.

Decisions for Planning Board/Commission meetings will be made by the respective Chairman and announced on the County's Planning Board hot line. Individuals may call the following numbers for announcements concerning meetings:

Montgomery County Planning Board	(301) 495-1333
Prince George's County Planning Board	(301) 952-5330

II. Authority to Declare Commission Emergencies and Liberal Leave

In the event of an emergency, the Commission assesses the severity of conditions and may declare a closing/delay based on a Local, Area-Wide or General Emergency, or Liberal Leave. With respect to weather-related closings, such decisions are made with consideration of decisions made by the County Government in which the facility is located. In circumstances that do not require closing of work facilities, the agency may declare Liberal Leave status.

A. Emergency Closings

1. Local Emergency

Local emergencies are declared by the Department Head when a closing affects a limited service or facility within a department. Closing of the Executive Office Building (Central Administrative Services) shall be considered a local emergency.

2. Area-wide Emergency

Area-wide emergencies are declared when there is a need to close the entire agency, or one or more entire departments (multiple facilities) within the Commission. Area-wide emergencies are declared by the Executive Director after consultation with the respective Planning Board Chair(s) for affected areas.

3. General Emergency

General emergencies are declared by the Executive Director with the approval of the Planning Board Chairs for closings of the entire agency due to catastrophic conditions including, but not limited to: unusually extreme weather conditions such as blizzards, epidemics, or civil disturbances.

B. Liberal Leave

The Commission follows the Liberal Leave designation of the County government in which the Commission facility is located. (Liberal Leave is generally declared to provide employees flexibility in reporting to or leaving work due to inclement weather or other emergency.

Liberal Leave status allows employees, except those in positions designated as essential, to use their own leave (Personal, Annual, or Compensatory) to remain home from work or to leave work early without obtaining prior approval from their supervisor. However, employees should advise their respective supervisor of their decision to leave. Such leave is authorized only for the period of time designated as Liberal Leave status.

III. Essential Employees and Non-Essential Employees

A. Essential Employees

The agency has identified on an agency-wide basis, position classification which are considered “essential” during weather and other declared emergencies. These essential positions perform work needed for the continued operation of critical agency services and/or the reopening of closed facilities. Accordingly, employees in essential positions must report to work during the declaration of liberal leave, local, area-wide, and/or general emergency closings unless otherwise notified by their supervisor. Each department is responsible for establishing a notification system for its employees. Park Police Officers are not included in the agency’s essential employee listing as their positions are considered critical at all times. Officers are required to report as directed by their department.

Essential employees who fail to report without being on pre-approved leave or released by the supervisor of the requirement to report to work, will be considered in absence-without-leave status and subject to disciplinary action. Unless approved in advance, leave during Liberal Leave status or declared emergencies (local, area-wide and general) closings will not be granted except in cases of illness, injury, or personal emergency. Requests for leave due to illness or injury must be accompanied by medical certification. Additionally, employees who have been granted the use of leave prior to declaration of liberal leave or an emergency closing will be permitted to continue the approved period of leave without disciplinary action.

The following position categories have been designated by Department Heads as essential personnel. The designation of essential positions may change based on a department’s work program requirements and the type/timing of an emergency. Department Heads (or designees) may identify specific positions within the identified essential categories and designate additional position categories on an as needed basis. Any essential position may be released from the requirement to work during Liberal Leave and/or a declared emergency when services are not needed.

- Assistant Parks Division Chief
- Regional Operations Managers
- Park Managers
- Lead Carpenter
- Construction and Maintenance Manager
- Lead Electrician
- Equipment Operators
- Lead HVAC Mechanic
- Mechanic, Senior Mechanic and Lead Mechanic
- Park Maintenance Leader
- Park Maintenance Managers
- Park Maintenance Workers II and III
- Park Police Communications Technicians and Communications Supervisor
- Park Rangers and Park Ranger Supervisor
- Payroll Specialists/Supervisor
- Lead Plumber
- Park Police Stable Manager
- Park Naturalists and Nature Program Facility Managers responsible for care of animals/livestock at nature centers/farms.
- Trade Shop Supervisor I and II
- Lead Welder
- Department Heads
- IT Technology staff
- Facility Emergency Coordinators
- Urban Forester
- Tree Climbers

A. Non-Essential Employees

In the event of an emergency closing, Merit System employees receive paid Administrative leave (at straight time) for all regularly scheduled work hours; For example, if the employee was informed not to report to work, or was released to go home early, Administrative leave is granted for scheduled hours which could not be worked due to the emergency closing.

In situations involving Liberal Leave, a non-essential employee is permitted to use his/her own leave without obtaining prior approval from the supervisor.

Please Note: Park Police Officers shall report to work and follow the leave approval policies as established by their department.

IV. Compensation for Work Required During Declared Emergencies

Pursuant to the provisions of the Merit System Rules and Regulations and applicable Collective Bargaining Agreements, employees who are required to work during Commission closings may be entitled to premium pay whether such time worked is within or outside the regular workweek. The amount of premium pay is based on the type of emergency worked and the number of authorized work hours.

The following provisions apply to Merit System employees unless otherwise stated in applicable Collective Bargaining Agreements. Compensation for contract employees who are required to work during an emergency shall be administered pursuant to Practice 2-16, Contract Employment: Seasonal/Intermittent, Temporary and Term Employment.

A. Local Emergency:

During a local emergency, an essential employee receives his or her regular rate of pay for all hours that fall within the employee's regularly scheduled workday; and one and one-half (1-1/2) times the assigned rate of pay for all hours worked during the declared emergency which fall outside the employee's regularly scheduled workday.

B. Area-wide Emergency:

During Area-wide emergencies, an essential employee receives two (2) times the assigned rate of pay for all hours worked during the declared emergency when the hours fall within their regularly scheduled workday; and two and one-half (2.5) times the assigned rate of pay for all worked during the declared emergency which fall outside the employee's regularly scheduled workday.

C. General Emergency:

During a general emergency, employees designated as essential must receive two and one-half (2.5) times the assigned rate of pay for all hours during the declared emergency.

D. Emergency Work on a Holiday:

Work performed during any type of emergency which occurs on a Commission holiday is paid at the rate of two and one half (2-1/2) times the employee's assigned rate of pay for all hours worked.

Please Note: Leave and compensation decisions pertaining to employees represented by the FOP or MCGEO collective bargaining units shall comply with the respective Collective Bargaining Agreement. Practice 2-16, Contract Employment: Seasonal/Intermittent, Temporary and Term Employment shall be consulted for leave and compensation issues pertaining to contract employees.

V. Maximum Authorized Work Hours

In times of emergency it may become necessary for essential employees to work extended hours or on days, which fall outside their normal work schedule. In these cases, employees shall be compensated according to applicable emergency work compensation policies. However, the following should be considered when scheduling employees to work:

- In accordance with the Fair Labor Standards Act, employees shall be compensated for all authorized work hours. Meal and break times (where an employee is released from duty) should not be included in the calculation of work hours. Represented employees shall be compensated in accordance with their Collective Bargaining Agreement.
- Employees may not be scheduled to work more than a total of 18 hours within a day. Employees assigned to operate equipment may not be scheduled to work shifts greater than 12 hours in a day. A day is defined as any consecutive 24-hour period.

VI. Workplace Checklist for Emergency Conditions

Facility related emergency information is communicated by the respective designated emergency coordinators and/or management. Information related to severe weather conditions is available through the National Weather Service. In addition to monitoring local emergency conditions, employees should be familiar with information provided under Section I., "Announcement of Facility/Office Closings and Liberal Leave Status". This section provides employees guidance on obtaining information on closings/liberal leave/delays due to emergency conditions.

Additionally, facility supervisors should ensure that Emergency Action Plans for their facilities are up to date and that all employees are familiar with the Emergency Action Plan for their specific location. Each Plan should name the designated Emergency Coordinator for the facility and outline response procedures for various types of emergencies. Questions regarding a facility's Emergency Action Plan should be directed to your designated Emergency Coordinator or Facility Manager. General questions regarding emergency preparedness/action plans may also be directed to the Risk Management and Safety Office at 301-454-1681/82/93.

The following information is provided as guidance for workplace and home safety. Should the need arise for emergency response and specific evacuation instructions, the Commission will coordinate such plans with local emergency agencies and disseminate information to all departments through the Risk and Safety Management Office.

In any emergency situation, staff should also:

- Remain calm;
- Check public announcements for emergency bulletins;
- Follow direction provided by your facility's emergency coordinator on information related to building preparedness, response, and/or evacuation;
- Prior to the emergency, employees should notify family member(s) of their evacuation plan in the event the Commission decides to close facilities; and
- In the event of an evacuation, the Park Police must be notified in the event that any staff is unable to leave the workplace or required to remain at work for essential operations.
 - o Prince George's County Park Police: 301-949-3010
 - o Montgomery County Park Police: 301-459-3232

Emergency-Specific Actions

Fire

- Proceed to the nearest stairwell and exit the building.
- DO NOT use elevators.
- Meet at a designated outside meeting area for your facility (communicated by facility emergency coordinators); check in with your floor warden.
- Keep streets and driveways clear to provide adequate access to emergency vehicles.

Severe Winds/Hurricane/Tornados

- Stay away from windows and doors, and offices with exterior windows.
- Close all interior doors leading to the outside or to perimeter rooms.
- In a multiple-story building, go to an interior room on the first or second floor.

Flooding Conditions

- If advised by the Commission to evacuate, do so immediately and follow the guidance of your facility's designated Emergency Coordinator.
- Keep abreast of road conditions through the news media.
- Move to a safe area before access is cut off by floodwater.
- Do not attempt to cross flowing water. As little as six inches of water may cause you to lose control of your vehicle.

Hazard Materials Incidents/Threats (Chemical, Biological, Radiation Exposures/ Incidents)

- Exit building unless instructed to shelter-in-place.
- If instructed to shelter in place:
 - o Turn off your wall HVAC unit.
 - o Move to an interior space.
 - o Follow instructions from emergency coordinator/response personnel.

Earthquakes

- During an active earthquake, take cover under a sturdy piece of furniture or stand in a load-bearing doorway.
- Stay away from glass, windows, outside walls, or other building fixtures that could break or fall.
- STAY INSIDE until the shaking stops, then exit using the stairwell.
- DO NOT use elevators.
- Until released from duty, remain at a designated outside meeting area for your facility (communicated by facility Emergency Coordinators); check in with your floor warden.
- Keep streets or driveways clear to provide adequate access to emergency vehicles.

VII. Additional Information/Questions

Employees should check with their respective department for specific instructions for reporting to work during Commission emergencies.

Individuals who are represented by a Union also should refer to their Collective Bargaining Agreement for specific guidance on leave/compensation during declared emergencies.

Leave/compensation issues pertaining to contract employees shall be administered pursuant to Practice 2-16, Contract Employment: Seasonal/Intermittent, Temporary and Term Employment.

General questions regarding this NOTICE should be directed to the Corporate Policy Office at 301-454-1740. Questions regarding compensation/leave policies should be referred Human Resources at 301-454-1727 or 301-454-1408. Questions regarding the handling of emergency conditions should be directed to the Risk Management and Safety Office at 301-454-1681/82.