Washington State
Military Department

# Department Policy No. HR-220-10

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| **Subject:** | Inclement Weather |
| **Former Number:** | New |
| **Authorizing Source:** | WAC 357-31-255<br>Washington Federation of State Employees Collective Bargaining Agreement<br>Washington Public Employees Association Collective Bargaining Agreement<br>Inclement Weather Frequently Asked Questions / Matrix Guidelines |
| **Information Contact:** | Human Resources Director<br>Building # 33 (253) 512-7941 |
| **Effective Date:** | January 13, 2010 |
| **Mandatory Review Date:** | April 1, 2018 |
| **Revised:** | April 1, 2014 |
| **Approved By:** | Bret D. Daugherty, Major General<br>The Adjutant General<br>Washington Military Department Director |

## Purpose

Outline the Washington Military Department's policy during inclement weather events or other natural disasters.

## Applicability

This policy is applicable to all state employees of the Washington Military Department. It does not apply to guardsmen on state active duty or to federal government personnel, to include Active Guard Reserve (AGR) members, traditional guardsmen in a federal military status, or military technicians.

## Policy

The term "inclement weather" refers to the conditions that constitute a hazardous weather event, where local weather conditions prevent employees from traveling to work. Inclement weather or other unforeseen conditions are serious in nature and can occur with little or no warning. Conditions include heavy snow and ice that make roadways impassable, dangerous wind, rain and other conditions related to extreme weather conditions. These conditions do not include occasional expected snow, ice or other expected weather patterns.

Employees are expected to report to work as scheduled, unless otherwise notified by the Agency. Employees are also expected to exercise good judgment regarding their personal circumstances, and must assume responsibility for their own health and safety, as well as for their work responsibilities. While this frequently requires a delicate balance, each individual must make the ultimate decision of whether to travel to work under varying conditions.

An "inclement weather emergency" is determined by the Agency Director or designee.

Because the Washington Military Department is an Emergency Response agency, and due to the nature of the mission and complexity of the operations, there are certain essential services that must be provided. Each division is responsible to maintain a list of essential personnel to provide those services during periods of severe or inclement weather. Employees are advised to consult with their supervisors to determine whether they are essential or non-essential and to obtain specific information about the proper reporting procedures. Due to mission of the Military Department, the Agency will not likely close due to inclement weather.

Essential employees are required to report for duty and to perform their duties despite the notification of a weather-related emergency. The term "essential employees" will be deemed to include an employee who has been designated as vital to the operation of the agency, whose presence is required regardless of the existence of an emergency condition, and whose absence from duty would endanger the safety and well being of the citizens of Washington State.

## Procedures

The procedures outlined below are intended as prescribed guidelines to be followed during inclement weather.

A. The Agency Director or designee, along with Division Directors, will keep abreast of weather or other conditions that could affect the operation of programs within the Agency by consulting various information resources, i.e., National Weather Service, State Patrol, local police, Washington State Department of Transportation, and/or Emergency Management Division Alert and Warning Center or Joint Operations Center. Based on information obtained through these

resources and in consultation with Division Directors, the Agency Director will make an informed decision whether the Agency should go to limited operations.

B. Operational decision will be based upon the following factors:

1. Type of forecast conditions (e.g. wind, snow, ice)
2. Severity of forecast condition
3. Reliability of the forecast
4. Visibility
5. Availability of grounds maintenance personnel and equipment
6. Traffic and roadway conditions in surrounding vicinity
7. Conditions at the Military Department's operational sites including the condition of roads and parking areas.

C. Guidelines for staffing during severe inclement weather of other emergency situations are as follows:

1. If the Agency Director determines that a division program or location will close due to severe inclement weather or other natural disaster, non-essential personnel will be released with no loss of pay during the closure.
2. Designation of employees will be made by management dependent on the existing conditions and critical needs.
3. Designated essential personnel are only those employees necessary to maintain critical operations. Designated employees could include emergency management staff, grounds/maintenance, electricians, heating ventilation & air conditioning technicians, heavy equipment operators and other critical services. These employees are considered essential to the operation of the Agency and will be notified in advance that they are expected to come to work in the event of a general closing of a program or division. Specific requirements and or needs that the employee has to ensure the ability to report to work will be handled on a case by case basis and appropriate approval obtained.
4. Essential personnel who work their normal hours during an inclement weather emergency will not receive additional compensation. Any hours worked outside their normal schedule will be compensated in accordance with applicable merit system rules and/or collective bargaining agreements.

5. Essential personnel who are unable to report to work during an inclement weather event must take leave in accordance with applicable collective bargaining agreements and/or merit system rules. If the employee must report late due to weather conditions, they will be allowed one (1) hour of paid time. Any additional delay in reporting to the worksite must be taken as leave for each day or shift in question.

D. Methods of Communication include utilization of the agency mass communication system, telephone, pager or email. The system is a redundant contact system and will be maintained with current state employee information in the State Human Resources Office.

1. Employees are responsible to notify Human Resources of any change in their contact information utilized for the Mass Communicator.

2. Employees are responsible to provide their manager with a contact number that can be used in the case of an emergency and need to call the employee back into work; notify them of a closure or late entry.

3. Managers are responsible to maintain a contact list of all employees under their supervision. List is to be kept confidential and is not for publication.

If the agency remains open during inclement weather or other natural disaster, but an employee is unable to report to work or to remain at work because of the inclement weather, the employees leave will be charged in the following order:

a. Earned compensatory/exchange time

b. Accrued vacation/annual leave

c. Accrued sick leave, up to a maximum of three (3) days in any calendar year

d. Leave without pay – Employees may voluntarily exercise this option in lieu of using accrued leave.

Employees who report to work late will be allowed up to one (1) hour of paid time. Any additional time must be taken as leave in the order listed above.

Employees who are already on approved leave when a general closing is designated will not have that leave time reinstated.

Resource: FAQ's/Matrix Guidelines are available from State Human Resources.