

# **CITY OF WORCESTER**

## **EMERGENCY STAFFING DURING INCLEMENT WEATHER**

**City Hall, 25 Meade Street, Worcester Public Library, Senior Center, and Technical Services**

### **1. Policy Statement**

It is the policy of the City of Worcester that unless otherwise directed by the City Manager, the City of Worcester is open for business to deliver public services during all scheduled hours of operations. Employees, unless otherwise directed, are expected to be at work as scheduled regardless of weather conditions or other emergency situations. Further, it is the policy of the City of Worcester that all city employees be designated as essential or non-essential to ensure city services and operations are delivered during emergency situations and that employee attendance and pay are in accordance with the provisions outlined below.

This policy covers severe weather conditions that limit transportation or mobility such as snowstorms, ice storms, wind storms, earthquakes, floods or any formal declaration by the City Manager of inclement weather which may cause unsafe driving conditions for both public and private transportation.

Therefore, in cases of extreme weather conditions or other emergency situations, the City Manager may determine that some or all non-emergency city services will be suspended, requiring the presence of only designated essential personnel.

### **2. Applicability**

This policy applies to City Hall employees, 25 Meade Street, Worcester Public Library, Senior Center, and Technical Services.

### **3. Definition of Essential Employees**

Each department head has the responsibility to designate employees as essential or non-essential and shall submit a list indicating essential employee designation to the Human Resources Department, by the first business day of December of each year. The list will include who will be considered essential personnel if a city office remains open and is down to a skeleton crew and it will include who is essential personnel if the city department is closed.

"Essential employees" shall mean those employees designated by management as such and include but may not be limited to, Cabinet and Department Heads, Public Works & Parks Employees, Police Officers, Firefighters, and Dispatchers.

### **4. Authority to Suspend Non-Emergency City Services**

Declarations of state of emergency by other governing officials, such as the Governor, are not definitive of the City's ability to open offices and maintain functions. The authority to suspend non-emergency city services and to direct non-essential employees not to report to work as a result of weather conditions or other emergency situations shall rest solely with the City Manager.

When the City Manager decides to suspend non-emergency city services, announcements will be made via the following outlets: Channel 192 Government Access Channel, WTAG 580, Social Media and the City's Website at [www.worcesterma.gov](http://www.worcesterma.gov), no later than 6:30 A.M.

Each department head shall establish a communication plan (website information, email distribution, voice messaging, etc.) to keep employees informed regarding directives for status of weather conditions or other emergency situation and for reporting to work. It is the employee's responsibility to monitor both media (local radio, social media and television stations) and the City's Website for communications issued by the City Manager.

## **5. Employee Attendance and Compensation**

- A. When inclement weather does not warrant the City Manager's proclamation of office closure or delayed opening, but individual employees decide not to report to work due to their own safety concerns, transportation problems or dependent care issues, the following compensation conditions shall apply:
- a. Employees must notify their supervisors as soon as possible of their decision not to report to work.
  - b. Time loss incurred by an employee due to inclement weather may be charged against vacation, personal leave, or time off without pay. Sick leave may not be utilized without a doctor's note for any employee, except for individuals on a documented leave with long-term illness.
- B. In the event the City Manager declares that City offices are closed due to inclement weather, the following compensation conditions shall apply:
- a. Those employees who have been designated by management as essential personnel shall report to work according to their work schedules. They shall be paid for hours worked as provided by the governing ordinance, rule or collective bargaining agreement.
  - b. Essential employees who do not report to work shall be charged vacation or personal leave for that day. If they are out of paid leave, they will be placed in a "no-pay" status. Sick leave may not be utilized without a doctor's note for any essential employees, except for individuals with long-term illness.
  - c. Employees who have been designated by management as non-essential personnel are expected not to report to work in the event of a closure.
  - d. Non-essential employees shall be paid for the day as if they had worked, with no deductions from any leave accrual.
- C. When inclement weather or other emergency conditions require the early closure of City offices, employees who report for work and are sent home shall be treated as if they had worked for the

entire day. Employees who do not report to work shall remain in their leave status for the entire day.

## **6. Employee Notification System:**

All Cabinet members are responsible to collect and maintain a list of contact information for all of their department employees. This information shall include the full name, address, telephone contact numbers (landline and cell) and email address for the employee. Additionally, it shall include an emergency contact person for that employee.

All department heads will be responsible to designate one person in their department who will be responsible for notifying all individuals in the department if there is an inclement weather incident.

If the City Manager determines that there is a need to delay or cancel non-essential employees reporting to work, or to close a city facility, a message will be sent to the list of designated employees provided to Human Resources via text message and email.

Additional information will also be released to the media, and posted on the cities website and various social media outlets (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Local TV stations). All employees are encouraged to always monitor these and other media outlets for important information, especially during inclement weather events.

Employees are advised to regularly check and register to the city's social media outlets for any cancellations or delays. Additionally, it is the employee's responsibility to notify their department head of any changes to their address, phone numbers, and emails.

## **7. Compliance**

Cabinet / Department Heads shall clearly communicate at least once a year employee designation as either essential or non-essential.

Cabinet / Department Heads may establish written procedures for the implementation and administration of this policy to facilitate the management of the personnel system within their departments, provided that such procedures do not conflict with the provisions of this policy.

Nothing in this policy is intended to modify collective bargaining agreements.

Date Revised: 11/20/17

Distribution: Department Heads/Cabinet Members/ All Employees