

United States Forest Service R-6 OR/WA Bureau of Land Management United States
Department of Agriculture PNW Department of Interior

Reply Refer To: 6160 (FS) / 1400-610/630 (BLM) (OR-953) P

Date: November 20, 2003

FS-Memorandum

EMS TRANSMISSION 11/21/2003

BLM-Instruction Memorandum No. OR-2004-025

Expires: 09/30/2005

To: All Oregon State Office Employees in the Portland Commuting Area
 All Forest Service Employees in the Portland Commuting Area

Subject: Hazardous Weather Conditions Policy

With the potential for extreme weather conditions, it is necessary to clarify the policy for office closure, excused absences and the coding of time and attendance (T&A) reports. Please read this policy carefully. Since all employees will be expected to be familiar with this policy if weather conditions so warrant, it is strongly encouraged that each employee keep a copy of this policy handy at home.

First, and most important, employees are to presume the office is open for business, regardless of weather conditions or emergency situations that may exist. Each employee is responsible for assessing the weather and transportation conditions that may exist and determining the risk of commuting to work. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and Forest Service (FS) do not require employees to travel during inclement weather; therefore, a liberal leave policy will be in effect during these periods. Employees who determine the risk is too great will be granted personal leave (annual leave, credit hours, compensatory time and leave without pay [LWOP]). Employees under a flexible schedule may adjust their hours to complete their basic work requirement.

However, if conditions are so severe (e.g., public safety authorities urge people to stay home), the office may be closed for all or part of the day. The primary source of information for FS and BLM employees concerning office closure or delayed arrival due to weather conditions is by contacting either of the following numbers:

BLM-OSO Status Lines: (503) 808-6000 or 1-800-935-4884; or
 FS R6/PNW Information Lines: (503) 808-2299 or 1-800-644-USDA.

Every attempt will be made to have a weather message recorded and available by 6:00 a.m., and it will be updated as weather conditions change. No message means you will be expected to report for work as usual.

GENERAL NOTICE TO EMPLOYEES

All employees should exercise individual judgment, in view of their particular circumstances, and not expose themselves to excessive risk in attempting to get to work under unusually hazardous driving or commuting conditions. If employees decide to stay home under inclement weather conditions, a liberal leave policy will be in effect, where employees can call their supervisor and request annual leave, credit hours or LWOP for that day. With safety as our main concern during these situations, all supervisors will be encouraged to grant the appropriate leave in those conditions.

DELAYED ARRIVAL - Group

If it is determined by the local agency officials that excused absence will be granted across the board for late arrival because severe weather has caused significant delays to citizens of the area in general, the announcement of a delayed arrival will be recorded on the BLM and FS Status/ Information Lines. If this is the situation, all employees working that day will be allowed limited administrative time to get to work to compensate for the conditions. This excused absence will generally not exceed two hours. Delayed arrival will be based on a number of conditions that will be considered by those making this

decision.

DELAYED ARRIVAL - Individual

When transportation problems arise from severe conditions, but not to the extent that warrant a **group delayed arrival** authorization, FS Staff Directors, PNW Program Managers, and BLM first line supervisors can excuse up to two hours of tardiness. The amount of time excused will be determined by each supervisor and based on circumstances specific to each employee. Due to the numerous climatic zones in the Portland metro area, considerations a supervisor can use in making this determination are alternate forms of transportation (TRI-MET, C-TRAN, car pooling, using four-wheel drive vehicles, or traction devices), the distance between residence and duty station, leaving earlier than normal to report to work, and efforts of similarly situated employees. For the BLM, Deputy State Directors and Staff Chiefs have the authority to grant additional leave on a case-by-case basis for those unusual circumstances where employees arrive later than two hours. For the FS, requests for excused absence over this amount must be submitted to the Director of Human Resources on the established FS Request for Excused Absence Due to Hazardous Weather Conditions Form.

EARLY DISMISSAL

If conditions develop that warrant the early dismissal of non-emergency employees, offices will be advised via intercom, telephone and/or by electronic mail. All on-duty employees will be excused without charge to leave. An employee on scheduled/authorized leave (annual, sick, LWOP) on the day of early dismissal cannot be granted administrative leave.

OFFICE CLOSURE

Offices will be closed only in extraordinary circumstances. Employees will be notified of office closure by calling the status/information numbers as specified above. Employees will be excused from work for the entire work day without charge to leave, including those on approved LWOP, annual, or sick leave.

ALTERNATIVE WORK SCHEDULES

Excused absence for employees under a flexible work schedule (maxiflex, variable week, variable day, gliding) is based on their regular scheduled work hours or on the employee's established pattern of work. A minimum of two pay periods is required to establish a pattern of work. Those employees on a compressed schedule (4-10 or 5-4/9) are authorized administrative leave based on the hours scheduled.

ALTERNATE WORKSITES

Employees authorized to work at alternate work sites including work-at-home are not covered by this policy while at the alternative work site.

EMERGENCY EMPLOYEES

This policy may not fully apply to Emergency employees. Emergency employees are expected to report for work on time unless excused by their supervisors.

REFERENCES

BLM Manual 1400-610, Release 1-1588 and 1400-630,.8; FSH 6109.11.

TIME SHEET CODING

For BLM: Employees: The proper coding for hazardous weather conditions is Administrative Leave-Weather-Used, hours code 061, with a cost structure of 0999. Questions on coding should be addressed to your Division timekeeper.

For FS: Employees: The proper coding for hazardous weather conditions is TC66. Questions on coding should be addressed to your Paycheck administrator.

Questions on the appropriate use of administrative leave should be directed through your supervisory channels.

/s/ Mike Ash
for Regional Forester
USDA Forest Service
Region 6

/s/ Marty Santiago
for Station Director
USDA Forest Service
Pacific NW Research Station

/s/ Kathy Eaton
for ELAINE M. BRONG
State Director
USDOI Bureau of Land Management
OR/WA

Authenticated by
Mary O'Leary
Management Assistant

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cc:
Forest Service
FS Staff Directors
Forest Supervisors

PNW
Sarita Fryer