



United States Department of Agriculture
Research, Education and Economics
Agricultural Research Service

December 10, 2008

SUBJECT: Emergency and Hazardous Weather Dismissal Plan

TO: All St. Paul ARS Employees

FROM: Carroll P. Vance, Location Coordinator /s/

This letter on emergency and hazardous weather dismissal, along with P & P 402.6 dated September 29, 1997, amended 12/8/97, constitutes the Emergency and Hazardous Weather Plan for all St. Paul ARS employees.

Emergency Situations may include:

- Local or Regional U.S. Dept of Homeland Security Advisory System – Severe (Red)
- Widespread power outages affecting Federal government installations
- Other emergency situations, terrorism and man-made disasters
- Pandemic influenza outbreak or other widespread public health emergencies

Hazardous weather conditions may include:

- Deep snow with capability for prolonged blocking of traffic
- Intense icing conditions on highways or streets
- Treacherous winds or continuing high velocity gusts
- Floods
- Tornado Warnings or extensive post-Tornado damage

Emergency procedures are as follows:

1. **Conditions for Closure of Facility:** The Location will be dismissed by the Location Coordinator taking in account weather and/or emergency situation and the guidance provided by the Twin Cities Federal Executive Board (FEB) and/or the University of Minnesota.
2. **Notification during working hours:** All Management Unit Program Assistants will be notified of the early dismissal and expected to notify all employees in the Unit.
3. **Notification during non-working hours:** The St. Paul Location will be considered



closed due to hazardous weather/emergency if the University of Minnesota closes or decided by the Location Coordinator. An announcement will be made on the Administrative Office phone numbers (651-649-5046, 5047, 5048) by 7:00 a.m.

4. **Granting Official Time:** Official time may be granted only within the guidelines of P&P 402.6, dated September 29, 1997, amended 12/8/97, and must be approved by your supervisor and ultimately the Location Coordinator.

- A. If an employee reports to work, and then decides to leave the work site because of weather-related concerns, and the Lab remains open, the employee will be charged with personal leave. If the Lab is officially closed **after** the employee leaves on personal leave, the employee will be charged with personal leave **only** for the period of time between when the employee left and when the Lab closed.

This interprets Policy & Procedure 402.6, Section 9 “Other Leave,” referencing “Emergency Dismissal or Closure,” to mean that an employee’s prudent decision to leave work for weather-related reasons before the Lab closes is **not** “planned” leave, and therefore the employee should be entitled to administrative leave when the Lab does close.

- B. If your work activity is open, but conditions are so hazardous for you that you will arrive late for work, or not at all, you must advise your supervisor within a reasonable time and request personal (such as annual) or official leave. Normally, immediate supervisors may excuse **up to 2 hours of tardiness**. Before making a determination, supervisors should consider all mitigating or aggravating factors including the employees’ distance from work, availability and mode of transportation, and the experiences of other employees in similar circumstances.

- C. If the work activity is closed prior to normal work hours on a day when regular work had been scheduled, the day becomes a nonworkday for leave purposes. Employees who had intended to work on that day will be granted excused absence. Employees who were on leave which had been approved prior to the closure will also be excused without charge to leave (leave can be charged only on workdays; a day on which the office does not open is not a workday, so leave cannot be charged).

6. The Administrative Officer or Acting AO will notify the Area Office via telephone or e-mail citing the closing.

ALL EMPLOYEES ARE TO PRESUME, UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTIFIED, THAT THEIR WORK ACTIVITY WILL BE OPEN EACH REGULAR WORKDAY REGARDLESS OF ANY WEATHER OR CONDITIONS THAT MAY DEVELOP. EMPLOYEES ARE NORMALLY EXPECTED TO COPE WITH DIFFICULT CONDITIONS OR DISRUPTIONS OF PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION FACILITIES AND ARRIVE AT WORK ON TIME.