



*A New Day for the Civil Service*

# **Washington, DC, Area Dismissal and Closure Procedures**

**2011-2012**

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# Purpose

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- The U.S. Office of Personnel Management's (OPM's) *Washington, DC, Area Dismissal and Closure Procedures* (Procedures) promote continuity of operations and productivity without compromising the safety of Federal employees and the general public
- The Procedures are used to plan for emergency situations, increase awareness, and encourage communication

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## Lessons Learned 2010-2011

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- Agency-specific emergencies are best handled by each agency
- Employees need empowerment to act
- Migration to telework should continue
- New operating status announcements needed to improve emergency tool kit
- Strategic use of OPM operating status announcements

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# Agency-Specific Emergencies

- For isolated events, each agency has the authority and responsibility to take immediate action to protect its employees from imminent danger without approval from OPM
- Examples include fires, localized flooding or power outages, loss of water, gas leak, or building damage after an earthquake

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## Employees Need Empowerment to Act

- Employees need to be empowered to follow OPM's operating status announcements
- OPM strongly encourages agencies to allow employees to depart without need for any further supervisory approval when an early departure announcement is made
- Agencies should communicate expectations and procedures annually

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# Continued Migration to Telework

- Telework Act of 2010 requires agencies to keep up efforts to implement telework. Agencies should continue to review telework policies and establish new telework agreements
- OPM strongly encourages agencies to establish clear procedures for the use of unscheduled telework so that both supervisors and employees can respond quickly to OPM operating status announcements without the need for additional approval on the day of the announcement
- Agencies must ensure that the IT infrastructure is in place to allow large numbers of employees to telework simultaneously

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# New OPM Operating Status Announcements Improve Emergency Tool Kit

- OPM consulted with a working group of HR specialists from Chief Human Capital Officer (CHCO) agencies, representatives from national labor organizations, and representatives from the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOC) and FEMA
- We developed additional guidance and three new OPM announcements:
  - STAGGERED EARLY DEPARTURE WITH FINAL DEPARTURE TIME
  - IMMEDIATE DEPARTURE
  - SHELTER-IN-PLACE

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# New OPM Operating Status Announcements Improve Emergency Tool Kit (2)

## Early Departure Announcement:

- We've expanded our early departure announcement from one announcement to three:
  - Early Departure with Staggered Departure Times (current)
  - Staggered Early Departure with a Final Departure Time (new)
  - Immediate Departure (new)
- The “Staggered Early Departure with a Final Departure Time” is designed to ensure that employees depart for safety purposes by a fixed time



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# New OPM Operating Status Announcements Improve Emergency Tool Kit (3)

## Immediate Departure Announcement:

- Most likely would be issued by individual agencies and is included in the OPM tool kit as a last resort option to communicate that Federal offices are closed to the public
- Would be used rarely, if at all, by OPM, and only in extreme circumstances for unanticipated emergency situations when there is no time for a staggered early departure



# New OPM Operating Status Announcements Improve Emergency Tool Kit (4)


## Shelter-in-Place (SIP):

- Would rarely, if ever, be used Governmentwide
- Would not supersede any agency-specific SIP plans or announcements
- Would require consultation with emergency management, law enforcement, and local authorities
- Examples might include tornadoes or exposure to outside radiological, biological, or chemical contaminants
- Included in the OPM tool kit as a last resort option to communicate that Federal offices are closed to the public

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# Strategic Use of OPM Operating Status Announcements

- OPM is committed to making operating status decisions as far in advance as feasible to reduce uncertainty and minimize demands on transportation infrastructure
- It will always remain our goal to keep employees working from home or have employees get home safely prior to the onset of dangerous conditions
- For anticipated weather events, OPM will consider the most strategic options, such as:
  - “Unscheduled leave/unscheduled telework” prior to the beginning of the day
  - If necessary, follow-up with a staggered departure announcement after the work day has begun if conditions deteriorate sooner than originally forecasted



# Example of Strategic Use of OPM Operating Status Announcements

OPM will use its operating status announcements strategically

For example—

- 3:00 a.m. – NWS forecasts heavy snow and ice for 7:00 p.m. OPM and MWCOCG conference call
- 3:30 a.m. – OPM Senior Staff conference call to discuss operating status announcement
- 4:00 a.m. – OPM announces: “OPEN WITH OPTION FOR UNSCHEDULED LEAVE OR UNSCHEDULED TELEWORK”
- 9:30 a.m. – NWS reports that the storm is moving fast and forecasts severe weather conditions reaching DC by 3:00 p.m. OPM and MWCOCG reconvene

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## Example of Strategic Use of OPM Operating Status Announcements (2)

- 10:00 a.m. – OPM Senior Staff conference call
- 10:30 a.m. – OPM announces: “OPEN – 2 HOUR(S) STAGGERED EARLY DEPARTURE – ALL EMPLOYEES MUST DEPART NO LATER THAN 1:00 P.M. AT WHICH TIME FEDERAL OFFICES ARE CLOSED TO THE PUBLIC”
- 4:30 p.m. – Local authorities close major roads for safety reasons. As a result, local authorities may recommend, and OPM may issue, a “SHELTER-IN-PLACE” announcement until conditions improve. (This would be a very rare situation.) Would impact only employees who did not follow the “no later than” departure time announcement



# Washington, DC, Area Operating Status Announcements

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- OPEN
- OPEN WITH OPTION FOR UNSCHEDULED LEAVE OR UNSCHEDULED TELEWORK
- OPEN – XX HOUR(S) DELAYED ARRIVAL – WITH OPTION FOR UNSCHEDULED LEAVE OR UNSCHEDULED TELEWORK
- OPEN – XX HOUR(S) STAGGERED EARLY DEPARTURE



## Washington, DC, Area Operating Status Announcements (2)

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- OPEN - XX HOUR(S) STAGGERED EARLY DEPARTURE – ALL EMPLOYEES MUST DEPART NO LATER THAN XX: XX AT WHICH TIME FEDERAL OFFICES ARE CLOSED TO THE PUBLIC.
- IMMEDIATE DEPARTURE – FEDERAL OFFICES ARE CLOSED TO THE PUBLIC
- FEDERAL OFFICES ARE CLOSED TO THE PUBLIC
- SHELTER-IN-PLACE