



HHS Circular C-007 Health and Human Services System Temporary Office Closures

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure consistent and coordinated office closure decision-making and communications when an emergency or severe weather condition occurs which temporarily disrupts or will disrupt the delivery of agency services or imperil agency personnel and/or equipment. State supported living centers and state hospitals will follow inclement weather policies established for those facilities.

Refer to Circular C-017, Leave Accounting for Inclement Weather, for policy on use of employee leave for emergency office closures. Also see Chapter 5, Work Leave, Section L of the HHSC Human Resources policy manual, which details employees' responsibilities during severe weather events.

Policy

It is the policy of the Texas health and human services (HHS) system that appropriate HHSC executive staff will approve office closures for non-essential services when necessary and that any office closure will be appropriately communicated to the affected management, staff, and public.

Definitions

- (1) Emergencies include any situation that would result in an office temporarily closing until the office is deemed safe and secure. Examples may include, but are not limited to:
 - Fire
 - Bomb threat
 - Power failure
 - Water line breaks
 - HVAC repair



- Health emergencies
 - Hazardous materials
- (2) Inclement weather conditions which may result in an office closure include any weather event which would endanger employees while at or traveling to/from their place of work. Examples include, but are not limited to:
- Sleet, snow, or icy roads
 - Hail
 - Flooding
 - Severe thunderstorms
 - Hurricane
- (3) Non-essential services are defined by the respective HHS agencies.

Persons Affected

This policy applies to all HHS staff and contractors.

Responsibilities

Each HHS agency chief operating officer and Regional Administrative Council (RAC) is responsible for the development and dissemination of set call down procedures and protocols for responding to office closure decisions, including the use of weather hotlines, websites, and other notification avenues.

Procedures

State Supported Living Centers and State Hospitals

State supported living centers and state hospitals will follow inclement weather policies established for those facilities.

Regional HHS Offices

For regional HHS offices located outside of Travis County, office closure decisions will be made according to system-wide policy SSS/RAS-001, Temporary Office Closures at Regional Sites.

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When the Regional Director of Administrative Services and/or designee has approved office closings, opening times, and other pertinent decisions, the information will be communicated to the Deputy Executive Commissioner for System Support Services, the HHS chief operating officers, and the HHSC Communications Office for appropriate broadcast communications and updating applicable employee call-in phone lines, including the statewide toll-free office information line, 1-888-TEX-RING (1-888-839-7464).

Offices Located in Travis County

For HHS offices located in Travis County, office closure decisions will be made by the Deputy Executive Commissioner for System Support Services, in consultation with the Executive Commissioner and the Associate Commissioner for Business and Regional Services, and communicated to chief operating officers of the HHS agencies, the HHSC Communications Office, and the Director of Regional Administrative Services (RAS) for appropriate broadcast communications and updating applicable employee call-in phone lines, including the statewide toll-free office information line, 1-888-TEX-RING (1-888-839-7464).

Inquiries

Inquiries regarding the content of this circular should be directed to Rolando Garza, Deputy Executive Commissioner for System Support Services, by phone at (512) 424-6660, or by email at Rolando.Garza@hhsc.state.tx.us.