



Frequently Asked Questions

Severe Weather and Emergency Evacuation Policy/Building Closing Updated November 9, 2018; Reviewed June 30, 2023

Severe Weather Provisions

1. Will state facilities close because of severe weather conditions?

No. It is the State of Iowa's policy that state facilities will not be closed during periods of severe weather.

2. Who determines whether severe weather conditions exist?

Two entities make this determination for any building on the Capitol Complex: The Office of the Governor and the Department of Administrative Services.

For facilities outside the Capitol Complex, in conjunction with the Department of Administrative Services, Department Directors or their designees will determine when a severe weather condition exists.

3. How do I know whether the proper authorities have determined that a severe weather condition exists?

Radio stations WHO and KIOA and television stations WHO, WOI, and KCCI will be notified of closings in Polk County. For areas outside of Polk County, listen to your local media outlets.

It is also appropriate for you to contact your supervisor prior to the beginning of your scheduled work time.

4. Do I have to report to work if it is determined that severe weather conditions exist?

It's important for government to serve the public and remain open even when the weather is severe. Still, there are times when severe weather poses health and/or safety risks for public employees. You do not have to report to work when the proper authorities have declared that severe weather conditions exist or if you believe, using reasonable judgement, that travelling to work would be unsafe.

However, if you choose not to report to work, you will not be paid unless you are allowed to work from an alternate worksite, you make up the missed time within the same workweek, or you use an accumulated leave benefit (vacation or compensatory time).

5. Do I get paid if severe weather conditions are declared?

No. You will not be paid unless you are allowed to work from an alternate worksite, you make up the missed time within the same workweek, or you use an accumulated leave benefit (vacation or compensatory time) consistent with your regularly scheduled work hours. You may also take leave without pay.

6. Who determines whether I can work at an alternate work location or when I can make up missed time?

Your supervisor will determine whether you may work in an alternate work location, where the suitable alternate work location will be, and whether you may make up missed time.

7. What if I do not have enough vacation or compensatory time to cover the time I missed work because of severe weather conditions?

You will have to take leave without pay or request approval from your supervisor to make up the missed time within the same workweek.

8. What if I reach my place of employment before I find out severe weather conditions have been declared? May I still work my regular hours that day instead of using vacation or making the hours up later?

Yes. Whenever possible, employees who arrive at work in such situations will be allowed to work their normal workday. However, there may be situations that require the facility be completely evacuated.

9. What if I cannot get to work because of the weather conditions but the proper authorities have not determined that severe weather conditions exist?

If you reasonably believe travel would be hazardous to your health and/or safety, you should call your supervisor and inform him or her of the situation. You will not be paid for the time you do not work unless you are allowed to work from an alternate worksite, you make up the missed time within the same workweek, or you use an accumulated leave benefit (vacation or compensatory time). You may also take leave without pay.

10. What if I cannot get to work because of severe weather for several days or the closing occurs toward the end of the pay week and I am not able to make up the time I missed?

You will have to use an accumulated leave benefit (vacation or compensatory time) or take leave without pay.

11. What if the collective bargaining agreement that covers my position provides for something different than the declared severe weather conditions policy?

Where there are differences between a collective bargaining agreement and this policy, the collective bargaining agreement prevails for employees covered by the agreement.

Emergency Evacuation Provisions (Facility Closures due to Emergency Conditions)

1. Will state facilities close because of emergency conditions?

If it is determined that it is unsafe to conduct normal business operations in a state facility, the State will close the facility until the condition can be remedied. In most cases, employees will be deployed to alternate work locations to continue their work.

2. What is an emergency condition?

An emergency condition exists when the facility is unsafe for normal business operations due to an environmental hazard, a structural failure, or a mechanical condition that would threaten the health and/or safety of employees.

3. Who determines whether an emergency condition exists?

Three entities jointly make this determination: The Department of Management, the Department of Administrative Services, and the Department Director.

4. Do I get paid if my building is closed because of an emergency condition?

In most cases, employees will be deployed to alternate work locations to continue their work.

If it is determined that there is no proper alternative work location, employees remain in paid status consistent with their regularly scheduled work hours until such time as they can return to work or reach an alternative work location.

5. Who determines whether I can work at an alternate location or when I can make up missed time?

Your supervisor will determine whether you may work in an alternate work location and the site of this alternate work location, or whether you may make up missed time.

6. What if I had vacation scheduled or if I was on sick leave at the time there was an emergency closing? Do I get credit in my vacation or sick leave bank because other employees will get paid for that time even though they are not working?

No. During emergency closings employees who are in paid work status are considered to be available to work at any time during their normally scheduled hours. If an employee is on vacation or sick leave or other paid leave status, the employee is not available for work and so the vacation, sick or other leave bank would not be credited.

7. What if the collective bargaining agreement that covers my position provides for something different than the declared emergency conditions requiring facility closure policy?

Where there are differences between a collective bargaining agreement and this policy, the collective bargaining agreement prevails for employees covered by the agreement.