

# QUEEN ANNE'S COUNTY STANDARD OPERATING POLICIES

**SECTION:** 300 - Human Resources

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**POLICY TITLE:** Inclement Weather/Emergency Closings

**POLICY NUMBER:** 300-105

**APPROVAL:** County Administrator  
Director of Human Resources

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** February 2000

**REVISION DATE(S):** December 2005; September 2007; October 2008

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1. **PURPOSE:** To establish guidelines for closing County offices in the event of extreme inclement weather or other emergency.
2. **APPLICABILITY/ELIGIBILITY:** Full-time and part-time employees in the classified service and the professional and executive service. Contractual employees have limited eligibility, refer to section 4.6.
3. **DEFINITIONS:**

**ADMINISTRATIVE LEAVE** – Authorized absence from work, approved by the County Administrator, whereby employees continue to receive pay at their regular rate without deductions from sick, vacation or personal leave balances.

**CONTRACTUAL EMPLOYEES** – An employee who signs a contract, does not receive full County benefits and is not part of the classified or professional and executive service.

**ESSENTIAL EMPLOYEES** – Those full-time and part-time employees in the classified or professional and executive service who are designated as “essential” by a Department Head for the purpose of providing essential services to County citizens and other County employees.

**EMPLOYEES** – for purposes of this policy, an employee is any full-time or part-time (percentage) employee in the classified service or professional and executive service. This does not include contractual employees.

**WORK DAY** – Shall be construed to mean the number of hours employees are routinely scheduled to work.

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## 4. PROCEDURE:

### 4.1 Responsibilities

- 4.1.1 The County Administrator/designee will make and disseminate official decisions concerning closing of County offices due to extremely inclement weather or other emergencies.
- 4.1.2 Such decisions will be transmitted to public media as designated in section 4.2 of this policy.
- 4.1.3 Department Heads will determine which employees are needed to maintain essential services when County offices are closed and employees will be notified of their status at the time of hire, transfer or promotion. The essential designation is reflected in the respective job description.
- 4.1.4 Department Heads will ensure the policy and procedures contained herein are fully disseminated and understood by employees in their department.
- 4.1.5 The Office of the Sheriff, Department of Emergency Services and the Department of Public Works will keep the County Administrator advised of those weather/emergency conditions which may affect the opening and closing of County offices.

### 4.2 Notification Procedure

- 4.2.1 The County Administrator shall notify the Human Resources Department of a decision to close or delay opening for County offices.
- 4.2.2 In the event a decision is made by the County Administrator to delay the opening of County offices or to close County offices for the day, the Human Resources Department will notify the local radio and television stations listed below and arrange for posting on the County website and television station.

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*Department of Human Resources, Voice Mail Message 410-758-4406*  
*QAC Website ([www.qac.org](http://www.qac.org))*

WBAL 1090 AM  
WCTR 1530 AM & FM  
WPOC 93.1 FM  
WCBM 680 AM  
WCEI 96.7 AM & FM

WJZ-TV Channel 13  
WMAR Channel 2  
WBOC Channel 16  
QACTV 7  
Department of Emergency Services

**These stations represent the *only* authorized source of official information concerning the time of opening Queen Anne's County Government offices.**

- 4.2.3 In the event the County Administrator elects to close offices early during the work day, department heads will be notified by the Human Resources Department, at which point the policy outlined in section 4.4 will apply.

### **4.3 Delayed Opening**

- 4.3.1 When inclement weather is severe enough, the County Administrator may elect to implement a delayed opening. In such event, the following announcement will be provided to and made by the radio and television stations identified in subsection 4.2:

***“Queen Anne's County Government will have a delayed opening.  
Essential employees report as scheduled.”***

- 4.3.2 Non-essential employees have a two hour grace period after their normally scheduled start time to report to work. This two hour grace period will be considered administrative leave and will not be deducted from the employee's sick, vacation or personal leave balances. Time reporting after the two hour grace period will be charged to the respective employee's personal or vacation leave balance.
- 4.3.3 Nonessential employees who voluntarily arrive at work prior to the two hour grace period will be paid at their regular rate and will not be paid overtime or given compensatory leave or additional personal leave for such time unless they have received prior approval from their immediate supervisor.

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- 4.3.4 Employees who call in sick during emergency or inclement weather conditions will have the time automatically reported as sick leave. At the discretion of the supervisor, an employee may be asked to provide a doctor's certificate to substantiate charging the absence to sick leave. If an employee cannot meet this requirement, the time will be reported as follows:
- (a) Employees with a positive sick, personal or vacation leave balance shall normally be placed on leave for the entire workday.
  - (b) Employees with a "zero" sick, personal or vacation leave balance (including any advanced sick leave they may be entitled to through the end of the calendar year) shall be placed on leave without pay for the entire workday.
- 4.3.5 Essential employees will be required to follow sections 4.5.3 – 4.5.6 and 4.5.8 of this policy regarding conditions preventing the opening of offices.
- 4.3.6 Essential employees will report to work as scheduled for their regular shift and will be credited two hours of personal leave for two hours worked during the grace period which the County is closed.

### **4.4 Early Closing**

- 4.4.1 The County Administrator will make and disseminate official decisions concerning closing of County offices due to extremely inclement weather or other emergencies.
- 4.4.2 Non-essential employees will be excused from work at the specified time of closing. These employees will be considered on administrative leave and will be paid at their regular rate for the balance of their normal work day.
- 4.4.3 Essential employees will remain on duty for the duration of their regular shift and will be compensated at their regular rate of pay for their scheduled workday and will be credited personal leave on an hour-for-hour basis for hours worked during the period of time for which the County is closed not to exceed 8 hours. Any hours worked in excess of their scheduled workday will be compensated as overtime at a rate of one and one half times their normal rate of pay.

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- 4.4.4 Personal leave will be credited on an hour-for-hour basis not to exceed 8 hours to non-essential employees who are directed, by their supervisor, to remain at work during a closure due to special circumstances.
- 4.4.5 Employees who departed prior to an official announcement or had previously been scheduled for leave shall be charged such leave for the appropriate period.

## 4.5 Conditions Preventing Opening of Offices

- 4.5.1 The County Administrator or designee is the **only** individual empowered to announce the closing of County offices due to extremely inclement weather or other emergencies.
- 4.5.2 In the event that County offices will not open because of inclement weather, the following announcement will be provided to the stations identified in subsection 4.2 of this policy:

*“Queen Anne’s County Government offices are closed today.  
Essential employees must report as scheduled.”*

- 4.5.3 Essential employees will report for their normal shift. Essential employees will be paid at their regular rate of pay for their regularly scheduled shift, time and one half for hours worked in excess of their regularly scheduled shift and will have personal leave credited for each hour worked up to 8 hours a day.
- 4.5.4 Essential employees who fail to report to work will have their time reported as leave without pay.
- 4.5.5 Essential employees who are required to report to work and are late due to weather conditions, at the discretion of the Supervisor, will have the option of making up the time in question within the pay period or charge personal or vacation leave on an hour-for-hour basis.
- 4.5.6 Essential employees who are instructed by their supervisor not to report for work or who are excused from work will be considered on administrative leave and will be paid at their regular rate.

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- 4.5.7 Non-essential employees who are scheduled to work are excused from reporting to work. These employees will be considered on administrative leave and paid at their regular rate of pay.
- 4.5.8 Employees on previously approved leave status are still on leave status (not administrative) and time will be reported in accordance with established Human Resource regulations and this policy. This status applies to both essential and non-essential employees.

## **4.6 Contract Employees**

- 4.6.1 Contract employees will not be compensated for more than an eight hour day actually worked unless the accumulated hours worked in a day exceed a 40-hour workweek. Contract employees are not eligible for administrative leave.

## **4.7 Recordkeeping**

- 4.7.1 Administrative leave is to be coded on the timesheets as 122 for full-time employees and 123 for part-time employees.
- 4.7.2 Departments will send a list of employees that are to receive the additional person leave to the Department of Budget and Finance with the timesheets. The list will include employee names and numbers.