



Emergency Closure

From time to time, all or part of County offices and/or operations may be closed or suspended due to emergencies such as power failure, hazardous weather, or unsafe workplace conditions. Authority for county-wide suspension of operations rests with the Board. Authority for closure of court offices rests with the Administrative Judge. If an emergency arises, the Board will consult via phone or other means and will notify the Clerk and Risk Manager if a decision to close is made.

When a decision to close is made, radio station Q102 will be asked to make a public service announcement, and a notice will be placed on the county website. If the decision to close is made after 9 am, the County Commissioners office and/or the County Clerk's office shall notify each Department Head and Elected Official, who will be responsible for notifying their employees. If court offices are closed for an emergency, the Administrative Judge will notify the Supreme Court and court clerks will maintain a record of the date and time of the office closure and subsequent re-opening.

In the absence of an announcement, it should be assumed that County offices and/or operations are not suspended. However, non-essential employees may be excused from work upon their request and at the discretion of the Department Head or Elected Official. Individual Elected Officials may also exercise their discretion to close their particular offices if they deem it necessary. Employees so released will not be paid, except through use of PTO or Compensatory Time.

Certain essential services are required to be maintained during any emergency closing. The employees involved in these essential services are excused from work only with the specific authorization of their supervisors, regardless of radio or other announcements. *Department Heads and Elected Officials should make clear beforehand who are essential employees in emergencies*, what their obligations are, and establish procedures to let them know whether they will be needed at work. Failure to report to work during emergencies by employees required for essential services may be cause for disciplinary action.

The nature and effect of emergencies may vary, so the pay policy to be followed may also vary. If an emergency closing occurs, all employees will not necessarily receive an equal amount of time off and employees who take time off may or may not be paid. While the County strives to be fair and reasonable in payment for closings, there is no legal obligation to reimburse employees when work is not available because of emergency conditions.

The County reserves the right to determine on a case-by-case basis: (1) Whether to close; (2) Whether employees will be paid; and (3) If employees will be paid, on what basis.