



Chicago Federal Executive Board

Building Partnerships for a Better Government

Emergency Alert and Dismissal Plan

SECTION I - POLICY

The following establishes a uniform policy, guidance and procedures for providing timely information to Federal agency executives in the immediate Chicago area, during emergency situations. Emergency situations, as defined by this plan, are those of sufficient magnitude that present a hazard or danger to the health or safety of Federal employees. Situations are confined to those involving Federal Government agencies as a whole, and do not focus on individuals.

Once a potential emergency situation is identified, the Co-Chairs of the Emergency Preparedness and Advisory Committee (EPAC) will consider appropriate action. When the need arises, the Co-Chairs of the EPAC will begin notifying Federal agency officials that a situation has/is developing and that a fact-specific recommendation or guidance will be issued once discussions are concluded. For events where advanced notice is available, the Co-Chairs may call for an EPAC meeting or electronically propose action for the committee to put to a vote prior to action being taken. If, in the judgment of the Co-Chairs, it is impossible or impractical to obtain further/additional advice from public safety officials or the EPAC members, they will act after conferring with each other. If one of the Co-Chairs is absent, the other Co-Chair will act in their stead. As a reminder, **EPAC guidance is a recommendation.**

SECTION II - ACTION OPTIONS FOR AGENCY LEADERSHIP

For notice events, such as weather-related situations where GSA buildings remain open, the agency head, whether located inside or outside the main business center of Chicago has full discretion to determine the appropriate response. The decision must balance concerns for employee safety with the obligation to deliver programs critical to the agency's mission. Agency directors have the following options:

1. Telework – Employees may be permitted to work remotely, as specified by their individual agency policy.
2. Alternative Work Schedules – Employees may be permitted to change their AWS day or work longer hours and fewer days.
3. Delayed Start Time – Employees may be permitted additional time for commuting to their work station.
4. Unscheduled Leave – Employees can be granted unscheduled annual leave or leave without pay (LWOP). **For most weather-related situations, unscheduled leave (formerly known as liberal leave) will be the default policy.**

5. Adjusted Early Dismissal – Employees may be dismissed early by a set number of hours (usually 2 hours) relative to their normal departure time.¹
6. Excused Absence / Administrative Leave – Employees may be excused for a period not exceeding 59 minutes² on any day for non-routine absence and in accordance with the agency’s leave policy. Additional administrative leave can be granted during conditions and in accordance with the agency’s policies on granting administrative leave.

SECTION III - EMERGENCY TYPES

Notice Events (Including Most Hazardous Weather Conditions)

For weather specific events, the Meteorologist-in-Charge of the National Weather Service Forecast Office will notify the Executive Director of the Federal Executive Board (FEB) and the Manager of Chicago Oversight for the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) and the Co-Chairs of the FEB. The Meteorologist-in-Charge shall initiate communication when there is a 70 percent or greater probability of severe weather of sufficient magnitude to cause serious and hazardous conditions dangerous to the health and safety of Federal employees.

No Notice Events

Unforeseen events may have an adverse impact on operations or present a dangerous environment. These events may include, but are not limited to, power failures involving Government agencies as a whole, acts of terrorism, civil disobedience, riots, fire, transportation strikes, etc. The types of emergencies may vary in their intensity and the area affected. The Co-Chairs of the EPAC should be notified by an appropriate official of any agency when, in that official's judgment, a situation is of sufficient magnitude to jeopardize the health and safety of Federal employees as a whole.

SECTION IV – PROCEDURES

Agency Responsibilities

It is strongly recommended for agency heads to develop and communicate to employees its leave policies to be followed in case of:

1. Emergencies (such as natural disasters, etc.);
2. Evacuations (caused by fire, flooding, pandemic, etc.);
3. Shelter-in-place (in response to chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear incidents).

Agencies should provide in writing and update annually, procedures to follow when emergencies such as those mentioned previously, occur. The notice should ensure that employees are aware of their

¹ While an early release may be a benefit to those who depend upon private transportation, that benefit must be weighed carefully when making a decision for early dismissal. The Regional Transportation Authority has indicated that neither the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA), nor the commuter railroads (METRA) can adjust capacity to handle early dismissals.

² Per CFR § 630.206 **Minimum charge.** (a) Unless an agency establishes a minimum charge of less than one hour, or establishes a different minimum charge through negotiations, the minimum charge for leave is one hour, and additional charges are in multiples thereof. If an employee is unavoidably or necessarily absent for less than one hour, or tardy, the agency, for adequate reason, may excuse him without charge to leave.

agency's emergency notification process. ***The notice should explain how employees are to proceed when attempting to contact their designated agency contact/ supervisor during an emergency and include an explanation of available emergency leave options.***

It is strongly recommended that agency leaders proactively identify emergency personnel and notify them in writing that they are designated as "emergency employees." The term "emergency employee" is used to designate those employees who must report for work in emergency situations. The notice should include the requirement that "emergency employees" report for or remain at work in emergency situations, and an explanation that dismissal or closure announcements do not apply to them unless they are instructed otherwise. Agencies must be careful to designate which employees are "emergency employees" for the purpose of notice events such as adverse weather conditions and other emergency situations. If an agency determines that a situation requires employees other than those who are designated as "emergency employees" to report for, or remain at, work during an emergency, the agency should establish a procedure for notifying them individually.

Notice Event Recommendations

Information from EPAC to all Federal Government agencies in the Chicago area will be initiated by the Co-Chairs of the EPAC. Upon determination that a situation is an emergency that requires notice, the following will occur:

1. The Chicago Federal Executive Board Emergency Notification System will be activated, sending a voice and email message to all agency heads and their designated emergency backups.
2. An advisory message will be placed on FEB 24-hour hotline: 312-353-9463 (WIND).

Off-Hours Notification

The determination and notification process for emergency situations that develop during off-duty hours are the same as previously outlined in the "Notice Event Recommendation" section of this policy.

Each agency head will be provided with a 24-hour hotline telephone number, which can be called to obtain the announcement directly from the FEB. The message will provide details of the conditions upon which the decision was based. This information will also be published on the FEB's social media platforms - including the FEB website, Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn accounts. Agency, installation, and office heads may disseminate the information to their employees through whatever internal agency procedures have already been established.

2020 Emergency Preparedness and Advisory Committee

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