



United States Department of Agriculture

Natural Resources Conservation Service
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Rural Development
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**NRCS West National Technology
Support Center**
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**NRCS National Water & Climate
Center**
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**NRCS West Remote Sensing
Laboratory**
1201 NE Lloyd Blvd, Suite 1010
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TO: All USDA Employees of NRCS, RD, OCIO and the NRCS National Centers
Oregon

SUBJECT: Annual Notice – Emergency Dismissals and Office Closure Procedures

This memorandum transmits the shared agency policy for emergency dismissals and office closure procedures for the Oregon USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Rural Development (RD), Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO), NRCS West National Technology Support Center (WNTSC), NRCS National Water and Climate Center (NWCC), and NRCS West Remote Sensing Laboratory (WRSL). The NRCS State Conservationist, RD State Director, OCIO Group Manager, and the directors of the NRCS National Centers have agreed to a single system for making decisions regarding office closures, delayed employee arrival times, or early dismissals.

This policy applies to the Portland metropolitan area employees for the above-listed agencies and employees located in field or area offices outside the Portland metropolitan area. This policy is applicable during situations that prevent a significant number of employees from reporting to work on time or that require agencies to shut down all or part of their activities. Such emergency situations may include major disasters, adverse weather conditions, natural disasters, and other incidents that cause the disruption of Government operations, with the exception of pandemics.

First and most importantly, employees are to presume their Oregon USDA office is open for business regardless of the weather conditions or emergency situations that may exist at the time. However, if employees feel the conditions are so hazardous that they must delay their departure from home, leave work early, or stay at home, a liberal leave policy will take effect. In these

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situations, the employees must use their accrued leave and notify their supervisor of their decision to take leave as soon as possible.

For the Portland metropolitan area, the decision to close an office, delay employee arrival times, or dismiss employees early will be made through joint consultation between the NRCS State Conservationist, RD State Director, OCIO Group Manager, and the directors of the NRCS National Centers (or their designated actings). For USDA Service Centers or other shared office locations outside the Portland metropolitan area, the decision to close an office, delay employee arrival times, or dismiss employees early will be made through joint consultation between the directors of the USDA agencies located in that particular office.

The following policies and procedures apply when it is necessary to consider closing an office, delaying employee arrival times, or dismissing employees early.

A. Emergencies Before the Start of the Workday

1. Portland-area Employees

Mass transportation considerations in the Portland metropolitan area creates the need for these specific procedures.

Every effort shall be made by the NRCS State Conservationist, RD State Director, OCIO Group Manager, and the directors of the NRCS National Centers to make a decision as to whether to close the office or delay employee arrival times prior to 6:00 a.m. If the office is closed, or if a delayed arrival time is implemented, a voicemail message will be placed on each employee's office phone using the USDA Group Distribution system.

In the event of hazardous weather or other emergency situations, employees should check their voicemail before leaving home by calling (503) 414-3245 and following the prompts to access their messages. Employees may also contact the NRCS Oregon Emergency Hotline by calling (866) 856-1920, extension 8. The absence of a message indicates that the office is open for business as usual.

Employees can also refer to the Oregon Federal Executive Board website at <http://www.bdiweb.org/oregon.feb.gov/index.htm> as an additional source of information regarding office closures or delayed arrivals. OFEB regularly posts updated information regarding Federal agency activity in the Portland area. In the event of an office closure or delayed arrival for the Portland-area USDA offices, the OFEB will be notified.

2. Service Center Employees

Decisions about office closures or delayed arrival times affecting field or area office employees will be made jointly by the directors or designated actings of the USDA

agencies located in the affected Service Centers or other shared office locations. The directors will provide their employees with a plan for communicating additional information. The directors will also notify the NRCS State Conservationist and RD State Director (or their designated acting), if applicable, when it is necessary to close an office, delay employee arrivals, or dismiss employees early.

B. Dismissals During Normal Work Hours

This procedure applies to both Portland-area and Service Center offices.

1. When an early dismissal is required, the dismissal time will be announced directly to employees in person, by telephone, and/or by email. Employees who are at work will be excused without charge to leave, even if the employee is scheduled to take leave later in the day.
2. In the following situations, the employee will be charged leave:
 - a. When employees leave work before the time set for the early dismissal, they must use their own leave from the time of their departure through the remainder of their scheduled workday.
 - b. If an employee is on scheduled leave during the day of the early dismissal, that employee must continue to use leave as scheduled.

C. Coding for Time and Attendance

When administrative leave is granted due to hazardous weather or other emergency situations, NRCS employees will code their time in the WebTCAS system as “Other Leave-Admin.” RD employees will code their time in the WebTA system using the appropriate option under Transaction Code 66.

1. Office Closure

When a decision is made to close an office, employees will be granted administrative leave, including those employees who may have otherwise been on approved leave that day. An employee on an alternative work schedule (AWS) whose AWS day off is the same day as the day during which the office is closed is not entitled to an “in lieu of” day off.

2. Delayed Arrival

When the office is open for business as usual but employees are allowed limited administrative leave to get to work, the employees are expected to arrive at work no later than the number of hours specified in the announcement. This excused absence will generally not exceed two hours. For example, if the announcement states a one-

hour delayed arrival policy, employees who would normally arrive at 8:00 a.m. must arrive for work no later than 9:00 a.m. All employees who arrive later than the designated number of hours for their delayed arrival must use their own leave for the excess time.

D. Information for Supervisors

1. Deciding When to Grant Leave in Hazardous Weather Conditions

Refer to the table at Exhibit A.

2. Distributing a Group Message on the ShorTel Voicemail System (1201 Lloyd Building only)

Refer to Exhibit B.

3. Placing a message on the NRCS Oregon Emergency Hotline Voicemail System

Refer to Exhibit B.

If you have any questions concerning this information, please contact your agency's Human Resources staff.



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State Conservationist
Natural Resources Conservation Service



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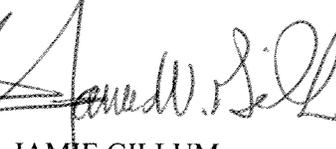
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MICHAEL STROBEL
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NRCS National Water
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Attachments:

Exhibit A – Decision Table for Granting Leave in Hazardous Weather Conditions

Exhibit B – Voicemail Message Procedures

Decision Table for Granting Leave in Hazardous Weather Conditions

IF	AND	THEN
Hazardous weather conditions develop during business hours	The decision is made to close the office	Employees code the portion of their normal workday hours that they were absent as working hours. They should note in the comments the time period that was "excused absence due to early dismissal."
Hazardous weather conditions develop during business hours	The decision is made to leave the office open	A liberal leave policy takes effect. Employees must follow normal procedures to take annual or credit leave.
Hazardous weather conditions develop prior to business hours	The decision is made to close the office	Employees are given administrative leave. This leave can only be granted one day at a time for no more than eight hours.
Hazardous weather conditions develop prior to business hours	The decision is made to open the office	A liberal leave policy takes effect. Employees must notify their supervisor if they decide to take annual or credit leave.

Voicemail Messages Procedures

1. Procedures for Placing a Group Message on the ShoreTel Voicemail System (1201 Lloyd Building only)

While in the ShoreTel voicemail system, select “send a message” by pressing “2.” Record the message and press the pound (#) key. At the “enter extension or system distribution listing” prompt, enter one of the following group distribution options:

<u>Group</u>	<u>List Number</u>
WNTSC	2603
NRCS	2623
RD	2624
NWCC	2625
WRSL	2621
OCIO	2622
All Lloyd Building (NRCS, RD, WNTSC, NWCC, WRSL)	2626

2. Procedures for Placing a Message on the Voicemail System for the NRCS Oregon Emergency Hotline

- The greeting recording cannot be more than 30 seconds long.
- Call the Ontario Service Center at (866) 856-1920.
- When the Auto Attendant greeting begins, *PRESS 9250*.
- You’ll hear the name of the mailbox (“NRCS Oregon Emergency Hotline”). Then you will hear “Remember one for yes, two for no. There are ____ new messages. Would you like to leave any messages?” *PRESS 2*.
- You will then hear “Would you like to access your setup options?” *PRESS 1*.
- You will then hear “Would you like to change your greetings?” *PRESS 1*.
- You will then hear “Your current greeting is _____. Would you like to switch to your alternate greeting?” *PRESS 2*.
- You will then hear “Record now.” At this point, *SPEAK YOUR MESSAGE*.
- You will then hear your message repeated, and you will be asked if you want to change it. From then on, just keep *PRESSING 2* through a series of questions.
- You will then hear “See you later.” *HANG UP*.