

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
RURAL DEVELOPMENT
HARRISBURG, PENNSYLVANIA

TO:		ISSUE NO. 321
State Office Area Office	STATE PROCEDURE NOTICE	DATE: 02/10/2011

RURAL DEVELOPMENT MANUAL CHANGES

Procedure for Requesting/Granting Leave: There are no changes to this section of this PA PN.

Hazardous Weather Leave:

This PA PN changes PA PN 319, issued on 01/10/2011, to update Hazardous Weather Policy changes for the State Office closings/delays only.

REMOVE: PA Instruction 2066-A, paragraph 2066.12 (r), pages 2, 3, and 4.

INSERT: PA Instruction 2066-A, paragraph 2066.12 (r), updated pages 1, 2, 3 and 4.

2066.12 (r)

USDA agencies follow a liberal leave policy for all employees incident to weather or emergency conditions.

STATE OFFICE- HAZARDOUS WEATHER POLICY:

The State Director will be the Responsible Official for the State Office. The policy for all employees, whose duty station is the USDA, Pennsylvania State Office, One Credit Union Place, Harrisburg, PA, is as follows:

1. Closure:

USDA, FSA/NRCS/RD State Office closure will follow the same guidance as issued by the Pennsylvania State Employees Credit Union (PSECU) located at One Credit Union Place, Harrisburg, PA. If PSECU announces that the PSECU building at One Credit Union Place, Harrisburg, PA, will be closed; then the USDA Pennsylvania State Office will be closed. It is the employee's individual responsibility to know what PSECU has announced for the PSECU building at One Credit Union Place in Harrisburg.

2. Delayed Opening:

USDA, FSA/NRCS/RD State Office Delayed Opening will follow the same guidance as issued by the Pennsylvania State Employees Credit Union (PSECU) located at One Credit Union Place, Harrisburg, PA. PSECU may announce delayed office openings in one of two ways.

a. Hard-Start Time Announced:

If PSECU announces that the PSECU building will have a delayed opening and gives a hard-start time (for example, 9:00 AM), then the USDA, FSA/NRCS/RD State Office will open at 9:00 AM. (Note that employees on a Maxiflex schedule would not be eligible to use glide time for that day only. A liberal leave policy would apply for time and attendance after the official delayed opening office start time.)

b. Hourly Delay Announced:

If PSECU announces that the PSECU building will have a delayed opening and does not give a hard-start time (for example, a 2-hour delayed opening is announced), then the USDA, FSA/NRCS/RD State Office will use the Official Office hours start time of 8:00 AM and apply the PSECU's guidance for the official office hour start time (same example, 8:00 AM + 2 hours = 10:00 AM). (Note that employees on a Maxiflex schedule would not be eligible to use glide time for that day only. A liberal leave policy would apply for time and attendance after the official delayed opening office start time.)

It is the employee's individual responsibility to know what PSECU has announced for the PSECU building at One Credit Union Place in Harrisburg.

3. Early Dismissal:

The Pennsylvania State Office FAC/SAC members will meet to discuss current or impending weather and travel conditions. Employees will be notified by their respective agency AO of any FAC/SAC decision to close the USDA, FSA/NRCS/RD State Office early due to inclement weather.

NATIONAL OFFICE NOTIFICATION: In the event the State Office closes, the State Director will notify Area Offices, the Under Secretary's Office and the Director, Emergency Preparedness Office.

AREA OFFICE- HAZARDOUS WEATHER POLICY:

1. Closure:

Team Leaders/Supervisors may determine to close any office, excusing all employees from work, if one of the following occurs:

- a. Declaration by the CAC that an emergency exists for which Rural Development employees should be excused from duty.
- b. Official public announcement by State, local, or Federal authorities that driving and travel should be avoided because of an emergency condition; or,
- c. Approval of the State Director.
- d. In determining whether to close an office before or after the beginning of business, Team Leaders/Supervisors must consult with their counterparts in other collocated agencies of USDA and, to the maximum extent possible, coordinate their plans to promote equitable treatment of all USDA employees.
- e. Supervisors who determine that weather conditions are too extreme for employees to travel safely should also stay home.

2. Delayed Opening:

All employees are responsible for obtaining the appropriate information as announced by media. In cases of emergency dismissal or closure before working hours, the local County Administrative Committee (CAC) will make every effort to notify the media or notify each individual of their decision before 6:00 a.m. and will provide one of the following announcements:

- a. Rural Development office is open on time and employees are expected to report as scheduled. Employees are reminded that Rural Development frequently does not make an announcement when no changes are required. When there is no announcement by the media or contact made to employees, employees are expected to report to work as usual. Any leave taken due to tardiness is subject to supervisory approval.
- b. Rural Development agencies are operating under an unscheduled leave policy; employees may take leave without prior approval. This means that Rural Development agencies will open on time, but employees not designated as "emergency employees" may take annual leave or LWOP without prior approval from their Supervisors. Accrued compensatory time or credit time may also be used instead of leave if requested by the employee. Employees should inform their Supervisors of their intentions.
- c. ***Rural Development is operating under an Adjusted Home Departure policy. Employees are requested to leave home (to be announced by the media or direct contact made to the employee) xx hours later than their normal departure time.*** This means that employees should adjust their normal home departure time, based upon the normal business hours of 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM. Reasonable delays in reporting for work at their duty station/ADS will be excused up to the time designated without loss of pay or charge to leave for employees who experience serious commuting delays. For example:

- i. Employee A has a tour of duty that day from 7:30 AM to 6:00 PM. The announcement by the media states that there is a 2-hour delay, due to hazardous weather. The employee will be excused and is not expected to report to duty until 10:00 AM this day, based on normal business hours of 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM. The employee will receive 2.5 hours of administrative leave from 7:30 AM to 10:00 AM.
- ii. Employee B has a tour of duty that day from 8:30 AM to 5:30 PM. The announcement by the media states that there is a 2-hour delay, due to hazardous weather. The employee will be excused and is not expected to report to duty until 10:00 AM this day, based on normal business hours of 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM. The employee will receive 1.5 administrative leave from 8:30 AM to 10:00 AM.

In both examples above, if the employee arrives later than 10:00 AM, the employee will be charged leave for the time they arrived after 10:00 AM.

- d. Rural Development is closed:

This means employees are excused from duty without loss of pay or charge to leave. When an office is closed for the entire day, all employees from that office who are in a pay status are entitled to the administrative leave, including those on previously approved annual or sick leave. Only employees in a non-pay status are not entitled to administrative leave for that day (LWOP/AWOL).

An employee on an alternative work schedule (AWS) whose AWS day off is the same workday on which a USDA office is closed is not entitled to another "in lieu of" day off.

- 3. Early Dismissal:

When an emergency situation occurs during normal work hours, the CAC will announce that Rural Development is operating under an "adjusted work dismissal" policy. Team Leaders/Supervisors will inform employees when a decision is made to release Rural Development employees early. Additionally, whether an employee is charged leave during early dismissal periods depends on whether the employee was in a duty or leave status at the time of the dismissal. For example:

- a. Team Leaders/Supervisors should not charge leave, but grant excused absence, for any employee **on duty** at the time an "adjusted work dismissal" policy is officially announced. An excused absence is appropriate for the remainder of the workday following the employee's authorized time of dismissal, even if the employee is scheduled to take leave later in the day.
- b. When an employee leaves after receiving official word of the pending dismissal, but before the time set for his or her authorized dismissal (with supervisory approval), the employee will be charged leave for the period remaining before the dismissal time.
- c. When an employee is absent on previously approved annual leave, sick leave or LWOP for the entire workday, the employee will be charged leave for the entire workday.

STATE OFFICE NOTIFICATIONS

Any Team Leader/Supervisor closing an office before or after beginning of business, must verbally notify the State Office (Human Resources) and follow-up in writing, certifying that this was a CAC decision, who was affected and the number of hours charged to Administrative Leave. ***The memo should identify who, what, when and why.*** (You should E-mail request to Human Resources for processing. Upon the State Director's concurrence, an approved copy will be forwarded to the timekeepers.)