



Natural  
Resources  
Conservation  
Service

**January 11, 2016**

1201 NE Lloyd Blvd.  
Suite 900  
Portland, OR 97232  
503-414-3200

**SUBJECT:** Emergency Dismissals and Office Closure Procedures

**File Code: 110**

**TO:** All Oregon USDA NRCS, RD, OCIO, & NRCS National Center Employees

The following agencies have agreed to a coordinated policy regarding emergency dismissal and office closure, 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).

This policy is applicable to all employees of the affected agencies during situations that prevent a significant number of employees from reporting to work or that require agencies to shut-down all or part of their activities. Such emergency situations may include adverse weather conditions, natural disasters, and other incidents that cause the disruption of Government operations.

First and more 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. The leaders of the agencies will work together to make office closure decisions and announce them as quickly as possible. Employees should work with their supervisors to request use of their accrued leave, as needed, if the employee feels that conditions are so hazardous that they must delay their departure from home, leave work early, or stay at home.

When Administrative Leave is granted due to an office closure event, 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. When charging Administrative Leave, employees should make a note in the comments section of their timesheet that they were authorized Administrative Leave due to an office closure event.

Office closure leave policy for NRCS employees will be guided by General Manual 360-415, subpart N(4). Other agencies will follow their individual leave policies pertaining to office closures.

For Portland Metropolitan Area Employees:

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, and the directors of the NRCS National Centers (or their designated acting).

Every effort shall be made by the NRCS State Conservationist, RD State Director, and the directors of the NRCS National Centers to make an office closure decision prior to 5:00 a.m. If the office is closed or if a delayed arrival time is implemented, a message will be left on the Hazardous Weather Mailbox. Employees can dial 503-414-3299 to listen to the message. The absence of a message indicates that the office is open for business as usual.

For Service Center Employees outside the Portland Metropolitan area in Oregon:

Decisions about office closures or delayed arrival times affecting field, area, or satellite office employees will be made jointly by the LFAC or designated acting of the USDA agencies located in the affected Service Centers or other shared office locations. A notification plan should be established for every office in order to communicate with affected employees. The designated supervisors will provide their employees with a plan for communicating additional information. The designated official will also notify the NRCS State Conservationist and RD State Director (or their designated acting), when it is necessary to close an office, delay employee arrivals, or dismiss employees early.

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State Conservationist  
Natural Resources Conservation Service

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State Director  
Rural Development

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MICHAEL STROBEL  
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