**Inclement Weather Policy**

**POLICY STATEMENT**

The City of Hamilton (“the City”) recognizes that Inclement Weather may temporarily prevent the availability and operations of City services. As these situations can, at times, create difficult and dangerous travel and work conditions, this may interfere with the normal business operation of the City. The City places importance on maintaining employee safety, while continuing to deliver essential services to the public.

**PURPOSE**

The purpose of this Policy is to:
- assign responsibility for determining closures and cancellations of City workplaces
- to clearly outline the communication protocol around a City closure decision resulting from inclement weather
- To clarify the responsibilities and expectations of employees in the event that there is an inclement weather event

**SCOPE**

This Policy applies to all City employees, including but not limited to regular, temporary and contract employees(collectively called “Employees”), in addition to volunteers, students and interns.

The *City of Hamilton’s Emergency Plan* will take precedence over this Policy.

**DEFINITIONS**

**Essential Service**

A service, facility or activity of the City of Hamilton that is or will be, at any time, necessary to ensure the safety and security of the public or the continued operation of City services

**Inclement Weather**

Severe or harsh environmental conditions that can include: snowstorms, ice storms, hurricanes, tornados, flooding or any unforeseen act of nature

**Standard Business Hours**

The standard business hours within City work locations are 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday
TERMS & CONDITIONS

1. INCLEMENT WEATHER

1.1 All employees shall make every reasonable effort, consistent with personal safety, to report to work unless instructed otherwise.

1.2 All employees will make a good faith effort to report to work on time. This includes, but is not limited to, allowing sufficient travel time and using alternate routes or alternate methods of transportation.

1.3 The City recognizes that some employees have greater distances to travel (i.e. home to work) than others and may live well outside of the City. The City also recognizes that Inclement Weather can vary considerably from one region to another, and as such, employees can be impacted differently depending on where they live.

1.4 Management may schedule staff in an appropriate manner given regard to safety, travel distance, operational need and employee concerns.

1.5 In the event that an employee is unable to arrive at their workplace at their normal starting time as a result of inclement weather conditions, the employee must make every reasonable effort to call their supervisor within a half hour of their start time to advise that he/she is unable to report to work or will likely be late due to weather conditions.

1.6 In the event that an employee is unable to report to their workplace as a result of inclement weather, but where City workplaces remain open, employees will normally be provided the opportunity to select from the choices listed below to cover missed time where eligible, applicable, operationally feasible, and as approved by their supervisor:

- working from home
- vacation days
- unpaid leave
- lieu time
- e-days
- personal time as per the Flexible Work Arrangements Policy
- working at an alternative City work location

2. CITY WIDE CLOSURES DUE TO INCLEMENT WEATHER

2.1 The decision to close City-wide workplaces due to inclement weather will be made by the City Manager or their designate.

2.2 In the event of inclement weather, the City Manager may make a
decision to close all non-essential City workplaces or to operate at a reduced level.

2.3 The City Manager’s decision will be based on a variety of information sources, including, but not limited to:

- Weather reports from Environment Canada
- Accessibility of local roadways and municipal parking lots
- Reports of road and highway conditions for Hamilton and surrounding areas
- Closing of school boards, McMaster University, as well as other businesses and services
- Departmental Inclement Weather Teams

2.4 Every effort will be taken to make a decision regarding closures and cancellations due to inclement weather and to communicate that decision before the start of the City’s standard business hours. As this may not always be possible, in the event that there is inclement weather employees are advised to monitor local news, the City of Hamilton’s website, and the employee information line (905-546-WORK) for updated information.

2.5 Where a decision is made to close the City before the start of standard business hours due to inclement weather, employees are not required to attend work that day unless their position has been pre-determined by their department to be an essential service.

2.6 Employees not required to be at their workplace on the date of a closure will be paid at their normal rate for the period of time that they were scheduled to work.

2.7 Employees who come to work during a closure will not be compensated beyond their normal rate.

2.8 Where a decision is made by the City Manager to close or cancel services during the workday as a result of inclement weather, a statement will be released to employees indicating the reason for the closure and the time at which the closure will be in effect.

2.9 At the hour designated for closing, all non-essential employees in the workplace will be entitled to leave without loss of pay.

2.10 Non-essential employees who choose to remain at work following a closure announcement will not be compensated beyond their normal rate.
Corporate Human Resources Policy

Work Environment

Policy No: HR-50-11

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>3. COMMUNICATION OF CITY-WIDE CLOSURES</th>
<th>3.1 Communication regarding closures will be made as soon as possible following the decision of the City Manager.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>3.2 City-wide closure and cancellation information for employees will be communicated via:</td>
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<td>• Supervisors and Managers</td>
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<td>• City of Hamilton employee email accounts</td>
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<td>• The Employee Information Line, 905-546-WORK (905-546-9675)</td>
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<td>4. NON CITY-WIDE FACILITY CLOSURES AND PROGRAM CANCELLATIONS</td>
<td>4.1 The decision to cancel programs or close facilities will be made departmentally by the General Manager or their designate.</td>
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<td>4.2 Departments will communicate facility and program closures and cancellations to their employees in accordance with their Department’s Business Continuity Plan and Department’s Inclement Weather Plan or both.</td>
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<td>5. ESSENTIAL SERVICES</td>
<td>5.1 Each department is responsible for developing, in advance, a Departmental Business Continuity Plan and/or a Departmental Inclement Weather Plan. This plan(s) must specify which positions are essential in the event of a closure due to inclement weather and clarify internal procedures for service cancellations and facility closures outside of city-wide closures.</td>
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<td>5.2 Employees must be made aware of their status as essential in advance of an inclement weather event.</td>
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<td>5.3 Where an employee who has been deemed essential fails to show up for work as expected during an inclement weather event, the employee will not be paid for the day and may be subject to disciplinary action.</td>
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<td>5.4 Positions predetermined by their department to be essential during an inclement weather event will not be compensated beyond their normal rate.</td>
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<td>6. EMPLOYEES NOT SCHEDULED TO BE IN THE WORKPLACE DURING A CLOSURE</td>
<td>6.1 Closures and cancellations are made to City workplaces and services during an inclement weather event to protect the safety of employees and community members who otherwise are expected to travel to City facilities.</td>
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6.2 Employees who had a leave pre-approved, and as such were not scheduled to report to their workplace on a day where a closure or cancellation occurred, will not have their leave day reinstated or be compensated as a result of the closure or cancellation. This includes, but is not limited to, leaves such as:

- Vacation
- Unpaid leaves of absence
- E-days
- Personal time

6.3 Where an employee has requested the use of a leave day as specified in 6.2 due to inclement weather, and a decision is made to close or suspend the services of the City on the same day that the request was made due to the same inclement weather event, the employee’s initial request will be cancelled.

6.4 Employees whose scheduled time off falls on a day that their work location is closed due to inclement weather (whether for the full day or partial day), will not be compensated as a result of the closure.

6.5 Employees who work from home through a flexible work arrangement are expected to work their full work day.

6.6 An employee who has been authorized to work from home due to inclement weather is expected to work their full work day in the event that City offices close part way through the day.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Employees

- If an employee believes that inclement weather is impeding their safety and is unsure of whether their work location has been closed, the employee may contact the Employee Information Line, 905-546-WORK (905-546-9675) or monitor local media.

- Report to workplace, if safe to do so and no announcement is made of City closure.

- Request to his/her manager to take vacation time, time in lieu, unpaid time, or to work from home (if the nature of the duties permit for it) where unable to report to the workplace due to inclement weather.

- Report absences in accordance with “Reporting Absence Policy.”
### Manager/Supervisor (or Designate)
- Promptly communicate closures and cancellations to direct reports; answer questions that employees have regarding policy and procedure in an inclement weather event.
- Where inclement weather occurs during regular working hours, instruct any staff, whose duties require travel, whether they are to continue on the job or return to the office.
- Make approval decision to grant employee time off due to inclement weather as per their request giving consideration whether the employee performs essential services, their level of staffing within team, and the operating needs of the work unit.
- May approve an employee’s request to telecommute from home, if the position can be performed at home.
- Consult with Human Resources where guidance is needed.
- Contribute to the development of departmental inclement weather plan.

### Department Management Teams
- Ensure that a Departmental Business Continuity Plan or Departmental Inclement Weather Plan is developed to (1) identify essential service positions, and (2) clarify internal procedures for service cancellations and facility closures outside of city-wide closures.
- Consult with Human Resources in the development of the inclement weather plan and the designation of essential services positions.

### General Manager (or Designate)
- Make decision to cancel or reduce departmental programs and facilities and follow the Department’s Inclement Weather plan.
- Communicate decisions on program cancellations or reduced services to Communications as soon as possible.

### City Manager
- Consult with appropriate/relevant members of Senior Management Team and review sources to make a decision on City closure in the event of pending or current inclement weather,
### Communications
- Make the decision for City-wide closures or reduced operations based on up to date information.
- Formally communicate final decision to SMT and Communications.
- Cascade communication on City closure to Directors; and ensure proper application of Policy.
- Communicate decision made by City Manager for City closure as follows:
  - update the Employee Information Line (546-WORK)
  - post notice on City website
  - send updates, as required
  - send Media Release to local media outlets including CHML, K-lite 102.9, CHAM, y108, CKOC, CHCH, Spec, Wave 94.7, McMaster and Mohawk Radio stations, Hamilton Community News
    - send email to all staff (on behalf of the City Manager)
- Ensure employee communications regarding closures and cancellations are issued as soon as possible after a closure decision is made

### Human Resources
- Policy and Planning Specialist:
  - Maintain and administer policy.
  - Provide advice, information, and assistance to employees and leadership with regard to the Inclement Weather Policy.
- Labour Relations:
  - Provide guidance and support where discipline is required.
  - Assist Department Management Team in the designation of essential service positions.
### Employment Services:
- Assist Department Management Team in the designation of essential service positions.

### Records Management:
- Assist with coding of absences.

### COMPLIANCE
Failure to comply with this Policy may result in appropriate disciplinary measures, up to and including dismissal.

### RELATED DOCUMENTS
1. *Department Inclement Weather Plan (as available)*
2. *Reporting an Absence Policy*
3. *Flexible Work Arrangements Policy*

### HISTORY
The Corporate Policy Review Group was consulted in the revisions made to this Policy.

This replaces the Severe Inclement Weather Policy dated 2008-04-10.

Senior Management Team approved the Inclement Weather policy 2012-12-13, and approved updates to this policy on 2015-10-02.