

Action Date: _____
 For Information Only

DEPARTMENTAL PERSONNEL MANUAL SYSTEM

DPM BULLETIN NO. 610- 9

DATE: NOV 18 1987

SUBJECT: Residential Zone Dismissal Plan for Washington, D.C.,
Area Federal Employees

The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) has recently adopted the attached plan for use during snow emergencies. This plan governs all Department of Transportation operations inside the Washington Capital Beltway.

The most significant change in this snow emergency plan is that Federal employees will be released from work according to where they live, not according to the agency in which they work. This Residential Zone Dismissal Plan is designed to resolve a major problem with the previous agency-by-agency dismissal plan -- that of cross-agency car pools.

OPM has also changed the text of their emergency announcements which are released to the media. These announcements, along with an explanation of their effect on the work status of employees, are contained in the attached plan.

Finally, OPM's plan requires that all employees -- both essential and nonessential -- who work in the Washington, D.C., area be informed in writing of the procedures for emergency dismissals. This annual notice should explain how employees will be notified and include an explanation of the media announcements OPM will be using. Administrations should publish these emergency procedures as soon as possible, since the Washington, D.C., area has already experienced a major snow storm. Please note that when emergencies occur before normal working hours, OPM will notify the media by 6 a.m. of the Federal work policy for that day. When emergencies occur during working hours, OPM will notify agency personnel directors by telephone of any dismissal policy. We will then telephone your office with this information.

Filing Instructions: File after FPM Chapter 610 Bulletins

Bulletin Expires: Upon Notification

Distribution: Personnel Council Members

OPI: M-16/Prosperi

Patricia Prosperi of my staff is available to answer any questions you may have about this plan. Ms. Prosperi may be reached on 366-9450.


Director of Personnel

Attachment



NOV 2 1967

MEMORANDUM TO DIRECTORS OF PERSONNEL

FROM: *Claudia Cooley*
Claudia Cooley
Associate Director
for Personnel Systems
and Oversight

SUBJECT: Residential Zone Dismissal Plan for
Washington, D.C., Area Federal Employees

On September 30, local government officials, meeting under the auspices of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG), adopted a Regional Snow Emergency Plan. The new plan, which becomes operational only when a major storm is expected to bring four or more inches of snow within 24 hours, provides for close consultation among local governments, METRO, OPM, and highway departments on when employees should report for work and whether they should leave early. However, the Federal Government and local governments will continue to make separate decisions affecting their own workforces.

Most elements of the new regional plan do not affect Federal agencies and employees directly. The regional plan does, however, include a new COG-designed "Residential Zone Dismissal Plan" for use if employees must be sent home early. OPM has agreed to adopt this new employee dismissal plan for Federal agencies and employees in the Washington, D.C., area.

The Residential Zone Dismissal Plan represents a significant change for Federal employees. As its name implies, the COG plan affects employees according to where they live, not where (or for whom) they work. Employees whose homes are the most distant from the city center will go home first. This "residential" approach addresses a major shortcoming of the previous Federal "agency-by-agency" (or "staggered") dismissal plan--that of cross-agency carpooling. While employees frequently carpool with people who work in other agencies (and who might be dismissed at other times), they are likely to carpool with people who live near them.



Each employee can easily determine his or her Residential Zone:

Zone 1 residents live beyond Montgomery, Prince Georges, and Fairfax Counties.

Zone 2 residents live in portions of Montgomery, Prince Georges, and Fairfax Counties that lie outside the Beltway.

Zone 3 residents live inside the Beltway, but outside the District of Columbia.

Zone 4 residents live in the District of Columbia.

When a decision is made to send Federal workers home early, OPM will inform agencies of the dismissal time for Zone 1 residents. (The dismissal time for Zone 1 residents will be at least 1 hour after METRO and traffic officials have been notified to prepare for an outbound rush.) Employees who live in the other Zones should leave at half-hour intervals thereafter. OPM encourages Federal agencies and employees to support the Residential Zone Dismissal Plan by acquainting all employees with the plan well in advance of the snow season and by adhering to its departure times. }

The Residential Zone Dismissal Plan has been incorporated in a revision of the Washington, D.C., area emergency dismissal or closure procedures. A copy of the revised procedures is attached for your information. This guidance supersedes the guidance now found in FPM Letter 610-7 (December 1, 1983), which will be revoked, and in Appendix A, Book 610, FPM Supplement 990-2, which will be revised to delete the Washington, D.C., area procedures. These procedures deal with a variety of emergency situations, including snow emergencies, severe icing conditions, floods, earthquakes, hurricanes, air pollution, power failures, and interruption of public transportation. This guidance also establishes procedures for dealing with emergencies that arise before normal working hours. In addition to the new Residential Zone Dismissal Plan, these procedures include certain minor changes in the wording of media announcements. Please take time to familiarize yourself with these changes and communicate them to all affected employees.

Attachment



WASHINGTON, D.C., AREA EMERGENCY DISMISSAL
OR CLOSURE PROCEDURES

Introduction

1. The following guidelines are intended to coordinate decisions made by Federal agencies concerning group dismissals or closure of activities in emergency situations in the Washington, D.C., area. These guidelines apply to snow emergencies, severe icing conditions, floods, earthquakes, hurricanes, air pollution, power failures, interruption of public transportation, and other situations in which significant numbers of employees are prevented from reporting to work on time or which require agencies to close all or part of their activities. These procedures apply to all executive agencies (except the U.S. Postal Service) inside the Washington Capital Beltway. Facilities outside the Beltway may prefer to develop their own plans, since they normally are subject to different emergency and traffic conditions than those inside the Beltway.

2. The concentration of Federal workers in the Washington, D.C., area requires that any change in their work hours because of emergency conditions be coordinated carefully with municipal and regional officials to minimize disruption of the highway and transit systems. For this reason it is essential that, to the extent possible, Federal agencies in the metropolitan area comply with this area-wide plan and the announced decisions on dismissal or closure. Independent action by agencies should be avoided. Some agencies may need to exclude certain offices or activities--especially those in the outlying areas--from the plan. These agencies should notify the Office of Personnel Management of such exemptions and update such notices when necessary. Application of this guidance must be consistent with the provisions of applicable collective bargaining agreements or other controlling policies, authorities, and instructions. Nothing in this plan is intended to limit an agency's authority to grant or deny leave or manage its workforce.

OPM Responsibilities

3. In the Washington, D.C., area, the Office of Personnel Management is the Federal Government's point of contact with the municipal governments and regional organizations, such as the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (METRO). The designated official at OPM will consult with appropriate municipal and regional officials before a decision on closure, dismissal, or special leave treatment is made and will brief the Director of OPM on highway, transit, and emergency conditions.

whether to curtail Federal operations. This decision will be based on the need to keep Federal operations functioning as normally as possible and on concern for the safety of Federal employees.

5. If the emergency occurs before normal working hours, OPM will make every effort to notify the news media by 6 a.m. of the policy to be announced. If the emergency occurs during work hours, OPM will notify agency personnel directors by telephone of any dismissal policy. Some agencies with law enforcement or emergency responsibilities have the Federal Emergency Management Agency's GP-2200 communications circuit. OPM will transmit the announcements on this circuit. Communication centers should be instructed to notify their personnel offices of the announcements.

Agency Responsibilities

6. At least annually, agencies should provide written procedures for emergency dismissal to employees working in the Washington, D.C., area. The notice should tell employees how they will be notified and include the text of the media announcements to be used and a detailed explanation of their meaning. (See paragraph 10.) The notice also should explain that accrued compensatory time may be used instead of leave or leave without pay (LWOP), if requested by the employee.

7. At least annually, agencies should identify essential personnel and notify them in writing that they are designated as "essential." The notice should include the requirement that essential personnel report to, 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. If an agency determines that a situation requires nonessential personnel to report to, or remain at, work, the agency should establish a procedure for notifying them individually.

8. Agencies are responsible for determining closure, dismissal, and leave policies for employees on shift work and for informing them of these decisions. Instructions concerning employees on flexitime are found in FPM supplement 990-2, book 610, appendix C, and, for employees on alternative work schedules, in FPM supplement 990-2, book 620.

9. Occasionally in emergency situations, individual employees may face special family situations (e.g., when employees are expected to report to work, but the schools open late or are closed). OPM will not provide the media with an announcement to cover these situations. Agencies should notify employees of procedures to be followed when this occurs and should be as flexible and understanding as possible in approving leave in these situations.



10. OPM will provide one of the following announcements to the media when an emergency develops before the workday begins. Agencies must explain the meaning of these announcements to employees because this will not be included in the media announcements.

- a. Federal employees should report to work on time. (Means Federal agencies will open on time and employees are expected to report as scheduled.) NOTE: OPM frequently does not make an announcement when no changes are required in Federal operations.
- b. Federal agencies are open; reasonable tardiness will be excused. (Means employees are expected to report to work on time, but reasonable tardiness will be excused for those employees experiencing commuting delays.)
- c. Federal agencies are open; employees may take leave without prior approval. (Means Federal agencies will open on time. Reasonable tardiness will be excused for those employees experiencing commuting delays. Employees--except those designated as essential--who are prevented from reporting to work because of emergency conditions, or who could expect to have difficulty returning home if they report for work, may take annual leave or LWOP without prior approval.)

NOTE: In some situations, it may be necessary to combine the last two announcements above, as follows: Federal agencies are open; reasonable tardiness will be excused, and employees may take leave without prior approval.

- d. Federal agencies are closed today. (Means employees are excused from duty without charge to leave, except for essential employees, who are expected to report to work on time.)

11. In determining the amount of excused absence to grant employees who experience commuting delays, agencies should consider such factors as distance, availability and mode of transportation, and the success of other employees in similar situations.

12. Workdays on which a Federal activity is closed are non-workdays for leave purposes. Because leave cannot be charged for nonworkdays (5 U.S.C. 6302(a)), employees who are on leave approved before the closure also must be granted excused absence. (Note: This does not apply to employees on LWOP pending disability retirement or while in receipt of workers' compensation, on military leave, on suspension, or in a nonpay status on the workday before and after the closure. These employees are not entitled to excused absence and should remain in their current status.)



Emergencies During Normal Work Hours

13. OPM is unlikely to announce an early dismissal of Federal employees when an emergency develops during normal work hours because the bus and subway systems would find it difficult to organize an early rush hour. However, when early dismissal is authorized by OPM, employees should be dismissed in accordance with the Residential Zone Dismissal Plan developed by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments. OPM will inform agencies of the dismissal time for Zone 1 residents. (The dismissal time for Zone 1 residents will be at least 1 hour after METRO and traffic officials have been notified to prepare for an outbound rush.) Residents of other Zones will be dismissed at half-hour intervals thereafter. Supervisors should exempt individual employees from authorized dismissal times under this plan only to avoid hardships (e.g., when an employee's carpool driver is dismissed earlier or when younger children are released early from school and no alternative forms of child care are available to the employee). The Residential Zone for each employee will be determined as follows (and as shown on the attached map):

Zone 1 residents live beyond Montgomery, Prince Georges, and Fairfax Counties.

Zone 2 residents live in portions of Montgomery, Prince Georges, and Fairfax Counties that lie outside the Beltway.

Zone 3 residents live inside the Beltway, but outside the District of Columbia.

Zone 4 residents live in the District of Columbia.

14. Whether agencies charge leave when an emergency develops during normal work hours depends upon whether the employee is on duty or on leave at the time of dismissal.

- a. Agencies should not charge leave, but grant excused absences, for employees on duty at the time of dismissal. An excused absence is appropriate for the remainder of the workday even if an employee was 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 dismissal, the agency should grant leave (if approved by the supervisor to avoid hardship) for the period remaining before the employee's official departure time. When an employee leaves before official word of the pending dismissal is received, the agency should charge leave or AWOL (absence without leave), as appropriate, for the remainder of the workday.



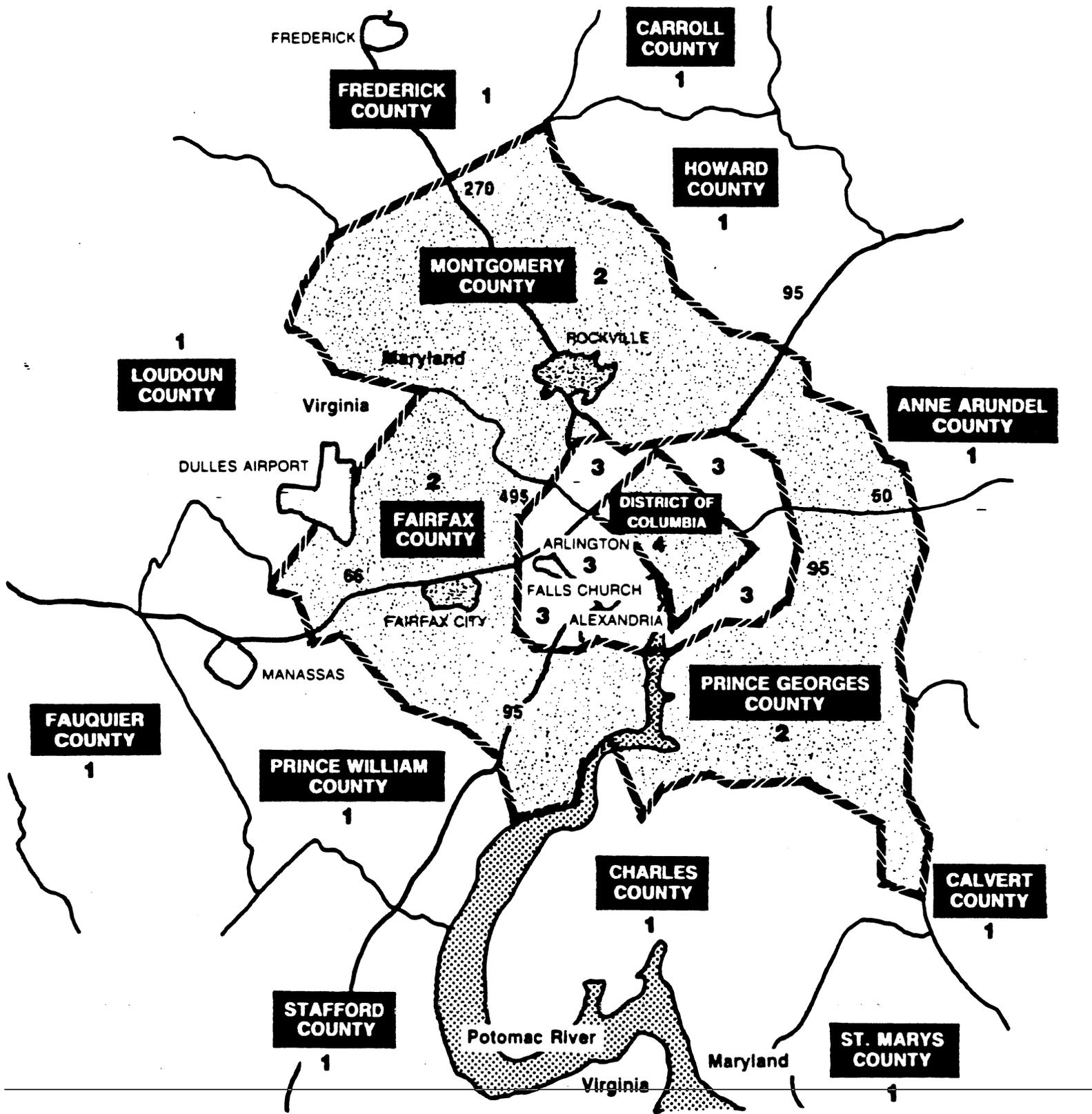
- c. When an employee was scheduled to return from leave during the period of the dismissal, the agency should continue to charge leave for the absence until the employee's scheduled return to duty, then charge any continuing absence due to the emergency in the same manner as absences of other employees who were on duty at the time of dismissal--i.e., as an excused absence.

- d. Normally, when an employee is scheduled to report to work before the dismissal, but fails to do so, the agency should charge annual leave, sick leave, or LWOP, as appropriate, for the entire workday. Exceptions to this policy should be made only in unusual circumstances.

Attachment



for the Washington Metropolitan Area



Numbers Represent Dismissal Stages

