



TOWN OF GREENWICH

Office of the First Selectman
Town Hall
101 Field Point Road
Greenwich, CT 06830

EMERGENCY CLOSING POLICY

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to standardize Town emergency closing procedures and to provide direction to Town employees and the community in the rare circumstances when the Town administration decides to close, delay, or alter Town facilities and/or operations during business hours. This policy also explains how employees will be notified of the Town's decisions, and clarifies expectations regarding attendance and performance of job-related duties.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all Town employees, major operations, and facilities, excluding Nathaniel Witherell, Greenwich Library, Perrot Memorial Library, and Greenwich Public Schools. Final operational decisions regarding Greenwich Public Schools are made by the Superintendent and follow Board of Education procedures and policies, except in extreme circumstances. No part of this policy shall supersede or obstruct the operations and authority of emergency personnel during an emergency response.

This policy is not intended to replace existing provisions in labor contracts and shall be implemented in conjunction with the appropriate policies administered by Human Resources.

POLICY

During inclement weather and other emergency situations in the Town of Greenwich, the safety of our community and employees is our top priority. At the same time, the Town has essential services and must maintain continuous and effective business operations. With due consideration to safety, the Town will operate normally to the greatest extent possible. Town employees should evaluate their own circumstances carefully, exercise appropriate judgment, and take responsibility for their safety when making decisions during inclement weather.

1.0 Authority to Close

Decisions to alter the Town's normal, significant operations are made by the First Selectman or designee. Decisions may be made with input from the Emergency Closing Group, which includes the following members:

- First Selectman, Chair (Decision Authority)
- Town Administrator, Co-chair (Decision Authority)
- Department of Public Works Commissioner (Advisory)
- Chief of Police (Advisory)
- Director of Human Resources (Advisory)
- Emergency Manager (Advisory and Facilitator)

The Emergency Manager is the lead facilitator of the group.

Individual Departments/Units

If an emergency occurs that affects an individual unit or small number of units (such as a power outage or minor flooding in a single building), employees should work from another location, preferably onsite, if possible. Department Heads and supervisors must obtain permission from the Office of the First Selectman, as appropriate, before releasing employees from work for more than a brief period.

Remaining Open

The Town will make every effort to remain fully operational and all employees are expected to make every effort, commensurate with their personal safety, to be at work. Individual departments and units are not permitted to close and release employees. Those decisions will be made on a Town-wide basis. Departments and units may cancel special events they sponsor at their discretion, and are responsible for communicating delays, cancelations, and postponements. Community members and special event attendees should contact the sponsoring units directly for information.

2.0 Notification Process

The Town will make notifications about closings or alterations to business operations as soon as possible, and will attempt to make notification by 5:30 a.m. of the impacted day. However, emergency conditions often change rapidly and unexpectedly, or may occur without prior notice/warning, requiring the Town to make or update decisions about business operations on short notice.

Town issued email is the definitive source of information about the Town's operating status for employees. All notifications regarding changes to the Town's routine operating schedule will be emailed, generally by Emergency Management or a designee, as soon as decisions are made.

In addition to email, notifications regarding the changes to the Town's routine operational status are distributed to local news/media agencies and posted on the entrance at Town Hall. Text message alerts may be issued regarding closings or alterations to cell phone numbers registered with the Town's alerting system.

If Town Hall is closed, meetings of boards, commissions, and committees will not be held as posted. Meeting attendees should pay close attention to the status of Town, as it may be altered due to changing or unexpected conditions.

3.0 Expectations for Employees

This section summarizes the information applicable to:

- All Employees (except Emergency Support Staff)
- Emergency Support Staff

All Employees (Except Emergency Support Staff)

When the Town is operating normally, employees are expected to report to work. During inclement weather, employees are expected to plan accordingly, including accounting for extra time needed to travel to and from work. If an employee decides not to remain at, or report to work because of concerns about travelling safely, employees may use accrued vacation or personal time. Employees must immediately notify their supervisors in these situations and should notify supervisors of this intent in advance.

When the Town closes facilities or alters routine operations, and directs employees not to report to work, employees will not be charged leave unless they had already been scheduled and approved for time off. If an employee is on a scheduled day off due to sick leave, vacation, personal time, any earned time, or leave of absence (without pay) during an official closing, delay, or early release, the employee's time will be charged the time that was already scheduled and approved.

Emergency Support Staff

Operations including Police, Fire, Human Services, Health Department, Public Works, Parks, and Recreation, Information Technology, Parking, Senior Center and senior support services, transportation, and other critical services may be required to continue, even in severe weather or during other circumstances that require the Town to close facilities or alter operations.

The Town may designate employees as “Emergency Support Staff” if it determines their job functions are necessary or potentially necessary to conduct the Town’s business, even when the Town is not operating normally. Employees designated as Emergency Support Staff are typically expected to report to or remain at work when the Town has a delayed opening, early release, or facility closure. In addition, emergency support functions are considered part of designated employees’ routine job descriptions.

Unless provided in the collective bargaining agreement, the Town shall not award compensatory time or extra compensation to employees for working during their regularly scheduled hours when the Town has a delay, early release, or closed facility.

RELATED POLICIES

Town of Greenwich Employee Handbook, Emergency Closings – Department of Human Resources

Human Resources Policy Manual, Emergency Closings – Department of Human Resources