

OPM 00-63

DATE: December 22, 2000

TO: All Appointing Authorities

FROM: Oscar B. Jackson, Jr., Administrator and
Cabinet Secretary of Human Resources

Bob Ricks, Commissioner, Department of
Public Safety and Cabinet Secretary of
Safety and Security

RE: State Agency Services During Hazardous Weather

74 O.S. §840-2.20A(B) and Merit Rule 530:10-15-72 provide for Governor Keating, or his designee, to authorize agencies or parts of agencies to maintain basic minimum services when hazardous weather impedes or delays the movement of employees to and from work. Pursuant to Executive Order 99-06 (March 9, 1999), Governor Keating has appointed Bob Ricks, Secretary of Safety and Security, to serve as his designee for authorizing these reductions in services.

Because of Oklahoma's unpredictable weather conditions, Secretary Ricks has conditionally limited his authority to the Oklahoma City metropolitan area, which includes the following counties: Canadian, Cleveland, Lincoln, Logan, McClain, Oklahoma, and Pottawatomie. Decisions regarding agency operations outside these seven counties are hereby given by Secretary Ricks to Appointing Authorities, to be made on an individual basis as necessary. However, Secretary Ricks reserves the authority to authorize reductions in service at any location in the state.

Each Appointing Authority is responsible for identifying the agency's basic minimum services to be provided by the agency (or parts of the agency) during hazardous weather conditions. Employees responsible for providing such basic minimum services, or who are called upon by their Appointing Authority to respond to the demands of the situation, shall remain at or report to work. **Each Appointing Authority is also responsible for ensuring that employees responsible for providing basic minimum services are informed of their status.**

If the decision is made to authorize state agencies to maintain basic minimum services, Secretary Rick's office will announce the curtailment of state government operations. Only personnel responsible for providing basic minimum services will be required to remain at or report to work. Each Appointing Authority is responsible for determining:

- (1) If the agency will remain open to the public, or
- (2) If the agency does not remain open to the public, whether it is necessary for the agency to maintain basic minimum services that require designated employees to remain at or report to work.

After the decision is made to authorize reductions in services, Secretary Ricks' office will notify the media of the decision and will include information concerning the need for employees responsible for basic minimum services to remain at or report to work. However, if an Appointing Authority outside of the seven county Oklahoma City metropolitan area makes the decision to authorize reductions in service at an agency or part of an agency, that Appointing Authority should contact Secretary Ricks and, if appropriate, make the notification to the media.

Though the announcement may refer to state government or state agencies in general, each Appointing Authority may determine if it is necessary for the agency to close, for the agency to remain open for business, or for the agency to maintain basic minimum services which require designated personnel to remain at or report to work. The Appointing Authority shall communicate this information to agency employees.

In accordance with Merit Rule 530:10-15-72, employees who are not responsible for basic minimum services have the following options to account for leave due to hazardous weather:

1. Charge the absence to enforced leave;
2. Charge the absence to accumulated compensatory time;
3. Charge the absence to accumulated annual leave;
4. Make up lost time in a manner consistent with the FLSA, if the Appointing Authority determines that office hours and schedules permit.

Leave for employees who are responsible for basic minimum services who do not report to work have the following options to account for leave:

1. Charge the absence to accumulated compensatory time;
2. Charge the absence to accumulated annual leave;
3. Make up lost time in a manner consistent with the FLSA, if the Appointing Authority determines that office hours and schedules permit.

Employees who are responsible for basic minimum services who do not report to work may be subject to disciplinary action.

Questions regarding the reduction of services may be directed to the Department of Public Safety at (405) 425-7706. Questions regarding Merit Rule provisions may be directed to OPM Management Services at (405) 521-6307.