



PERSONNEL RULES

WORKING CONDITIONS POWER OUTAGES & INCLEMENT WEATHER

§4109

Overview: This rule provides guidance to employees in the event of power failure, power outage, disruption, or interruption, either planned or unplanned. This rule also addresses inclement weather events, whether independent of or accompanied with a power outage. When emergency situations result in a power failure, this rule will be superseded by the County disaster plan as integrated by the Office of Emergency Services (OES).

Applicable to: All employees

Definitions: Essential services – Services that, if not provided, would endanger the life, health, or personal safety of whole or part of the population
Inclement weather – Conditions which are severe or harsh enough to make working outdoors or traveling to/from work unsafe or impractical
Power outage – Temporary disruption or loss of electrical power

Guidelines: Whether caused by a natural disaster, man-made error, unforeseen event, or planned maintenance, there may be times while conducting County business when power may be disrupted. In addition to power outages, circumstances may arise where weather conditions are so extreme it is not safe or practical for employees to travel to work. Safety will be the priority consideration during any power outage or inclement weather event.

During a power outage or inclement weather event, the Chief Administrator or designee may authorize a delayed opening or early release depending on the circumstances. In the event of a delayed opening due to inclement weather, the general practice will be a delayed opening of two hours. Employees who are ready and able to work at their regularly scheduled start time will receive a delayed start time. The intention of the delayed opening is to allow time for conditions to improve so employees can arrive at work safely.

Reporting to Work

Once the impact of the power outage or inclement weather event has been determined, and upon consulting with the Chief Administrator or designee, the Department Head may initiate contact procedures with employees. For unplanned power outages or unpredicted inclement weather events occurring before the start of an employee's work shift, the employee should plan on reporting to work at their usual workplace unless they are informed otherwise by the Department Head or their designee.

For planned power outages or predicted inclement weather events, the Department Head or their designee will communicate in a timely fashion to staff whether employees are to report to work, and if so, when, and where. Should the power be restored, or the inclement weather improve earlier than anticipated, the Department Head or their designee is responsible for communicating the revised plan.

Continuation of Work Plan

In the case of a power outage or inclement weather event, it is the County's goal to keep employees working by having a continuation of work plan in place, although tasks and locations may be temporarily changed. The inability to operate lights, phones, computers, servers, time clocks, automatic door locks, security alarms, surveillance cameras, and other equipment may limit employee safety and productivity. Departments should plan in advance to establish the following at a minimum:

- A plan to provide essential services for longer term outages
- Priorities for alternate power source, such as refrigeration, technology, cooling, internet access, etc.
- Alternate light sources
- Useful tasks that can be accomplished without the need for power-connected technology (projects, organization, filing, meetings)
- Tasks that can be completed remotely or an alternate work location, such as another County facility or from the employee's home
- A plan to assist clients/customers with/without the use of power-connected technology, including the ability to accept payments
- A plan to evacuate clients/customers and secure the building
- An internal security plan to ensure cash, confidential documents, and files are locked and secured
- Tasks that may keep employees productive while assisting other departments
- Tasks related to obligations as a disaster service worker

Supervisors may also consider reassigning lunch and rest breaks to coincide with power outages in order to minimize down time.

Compensation

It is the goal of the County to keep employees working during a power outage or inclement weather event. In the event of a delayed opening or early release declared by the Chief Administrator or designee, employees who are ready and able to work will be compensated at their normal rate of pay for the amount of time not worked. Employees will be required to return to work, after the County confirms conditions have improved enough for employees to safely return to the workplace. In the case of a delayed opening, employees unable to return to work as scheduled due to their own personal circumstances must notify their supervisor or designee as soon as possible. Employees who are not ready and able to work due to their own personal circumstances will be required to use their leave accruals. Leave without pay may be authorized by the Department Head or designee for those employees who have no accruals available for use. An employee may use management leave, vacation, personal time off (PTO), holiday in lieu (HIL), or compensatory time off (CTO) during any time off due to a power outage or inclement weather event. Sick leave will not be permitted.

For power outages or inclement weather lasting for more than one workday, the County is not responsible to pay the employee when all the following apply:

- Alternative assignments at the workplace or telecommuting is not considered feasible by the supervisor
- The (non-exempt) employee is completely relieved from duty and not on standby
- The employee is able to use the time effectively for their own purposes

Employees may elect to use accrued leave to receive compensation for a power outage or inclement weather event lasting more than one day. An employee may use management leave, vacation, personal time off (PTO), holiday in lieu (HIL), or compensatory time off (CTO) during any time off. Sick leave will not be permitted. Leave without pay may be authorized by the Department Head or their designee for those employees who have no accruals available for use. In this situation, the absence would not be considered an "occurrence" under TCPR §4101: Work Hours and Attendance.

When there is a power outage or inclement weather event and working conditions are such that the County cannot meet reasonable interior climate conditions and/or OSHA standards (sanitation issues, non-functioning toilets), employees will be placed on standby with pay. Employees must be available to supervisors and may be assigned work to complete at home.

Employees called back to work after release will be paid according to the procedures in the applicable Memorandum of Understanding.

In recognition of the requirement that exempt employees occasionally work beyond a normal workday, some flexibility is allowed for authorized time off with pay during the normal workday or workweek. An absence of less than half of the employee's regularly scheduled workday will not be deducted from leave accruals. Also, if an employee has worked a total of 40 or more hours in a workweek, he/she is not required to use leave accruals for partial day absences. However, an absence equal to or greater than half of the employee's regularly scheduled workday shall be deducted from an exempt employee's appropriate leave accruals when the employee has not worked 40 or more hours in a workweek.

Disaster Service Worker

All Tehama County employees are disaster service workers. Should the power outage or inclement weather event result in a declared emergency or natural disaster, employees who are unable to perform their regular duties may be assigned to other areas of need, see TCPR §1404: Disaster Service Worker / Oath

Procedure: Responsibilities for implementation, application, and enforcement of this rule are listed below.

Employee The employee is responsible for keeping up-to-date contact information available, and informing their supervisor and/or Department Head if they are unable to respond to work due to personal circumstances, as soon as practical.

Supervisor The supervisors should work with the Department Head and staff to create a continuation of work plan. If directed to do so by the Department Head, the supervisors will initiate contact procedures in the event there is a power outage prior to the workday.

Department Head If a Department Head receives advanced warning of a planned power outage, that information should be communicated to affected departments. If the outage is unplanned, a call should be made to the electric utility to determine if there is an estimated length of the outage. The Department Head or their designee will consult with the Chief Administrator or their designee to determine whether employees

should be released during a power outage, following the guidelines in this rule. The Department Head or their designee is also responsible for initiating contact procedures with employees in the event there is a power outage or inclement weather event prior to the workday. A Department Head who becomes aware of a planned power outage or predicted inclement weather event should inform the Chief Administrator or their designee.

Administration Inform Department Heads of any planned outages or predicted inclement weather events.

Required Forms: None

References: California Department of Industrial Relations; California Government Code §3100-3109; TCPR §1404: Disaster Service Worker / Oath; TCPR §4104: Exempt Employees; TCPR §6105: Leave Without Pay; TCPR §8106: Power Outage Safety Plan; Tehama County Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan (EPRP); 29 Code of Federal Regulations §785.16 and 785.17

Effective Date:

The provisions of this Code shall not supersede any state law, federal Law or current collective bargaining agreement between an employee organization and Tehama County. The provisions of these Codes shall not preclude specific County departments from developing operational policies and procedures.