

DECLARATION OF AN EMERGENCY.

As a general practice, the County does not close its operations unless continuing operations has been determined to endanger the health, safety or security of the County employees. When this determination is made, the County Judge or in his absence, a designated Commissioner is responsible for initiating the closing. Emergencies which may result in a determination to close County operations include, but is not limited to:

- Inclement weather such as ice & snow conditions
- Tornadoes
- Floods
- Other acts of God
- Nuclear, chemical, and biological emergencies
- Terrorist attacks
- Any other emergency declared by the federal, state, or local authority

CLOSING DUE TO AN EVACUATION ORDER.

When an evacuation has been ordered, all "non-essential", non-emergency personnel will be released from work and encouraged to evacuate. Employees designated by their Department Head as "essential" Emergency Services Personnel will not be authorized to evacuate if an evacuation order is issued in accordance with Chapter 22 of the Texas Labor Code. Any "essential" employee who fails to report to work as scheduled during an emergency evacuation order may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including job termination; if the employee is necessary to provide for the safety and well-being of the general public or is otherwise necessary for the restoration of vital services. All "essential" employees must be designated and made aware of their assignment prior to an emergency. A list of "essential" employees shall be provided to the Emergency Management Coordinator and the Human Resources Coordinator and shall be updated annually. Shifts may be established according to departmental needs at the discretion of the Department Head. Employees who are assigned "on call" status must notify supervisors of locations where they can be contacted.

COMPENSATION OF EMPLOYEES.

When there is an emergency closure of County offices, all "essential" employees who are required to work during the emergency closure may receive additional compensation as determined by the County Commissioners. The amount of such compensation and the duration of its applicability will be determined by the County Commissioners, in their sole discretion.

RETURN-TO-DUTY PHASE:

All "non-essential" employees will report to their usual work areas as soon as possible following the order for resumption of normal operations, after the termination or expiration of the emergency closure order and/or instructions from the applicable elected official/appointed Department head.

CONSEQUENCES FOR VIOLATION OF THE POLICY.

The County reserves the right to amend, change, or delete this policy at any time, with or without prior notice. Furthermore, this policy does not grant a right or benefit to any employee, either expressed or implied, that in any way alters the "at will" basis of employment that is intended by the County.

PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENTS. Local radio and news stations and local newspaper will be contacted by the County Judge concerning the closing and reopening of County offices. Information will also be posted on the County website.

When a countywide closing is not initiated, Elected and Appointed Officials retain the authority to make a determination for their own employees when weather conditions are so severe that it is unsafe for employees to travel from their residences to their assigned work stations. Elected and Appointed Officials are those Department Heads that have taken the oath and statement in accordance with Article XVI, §1 of the Texas Constitution.

1B-13 WEATHER CLOSINGS AND EMERGENCIES

As a general practice, the County does not close its operations unless the health, safety, and security of county employees are seriously brought into question. When this happens, either because of severe weather conditions or other emergencies, the County Judge is responsible for initiating the closing.

The County Judge will notify the following entities for a public announcement: local radio and news stations, local newspaper, and post on the County website. Announcements of an emergency closing will, to the extent possible, specify the starting and ending times of the closing. However, each elected official controls the working hours of their employees, even in an emergency situation.

Many County departments are continuous operating public safety and service departments. Many county personnel will be required to work during emergency closings and will be designated as "essential employees." Each department head is responsible for designating their employees as essential employees and providing alternate information to such personnel designated during emergency closings. Public safety will be foremost in the development of departmental emergency action plans.