

Georgia Department of Public Safety

Policy Manual

SUBJECT CLOSURE OF DEPARTMENT FACILITIES	POLICY NUMBER 5.19
DISTRIBUTION ALL EMPLOYEES	REVISED DATE 8/12/2025
	POLICY REVIEWED 8/12/2025

5.19.1 Purpose

To set forth uniform procedures for the closure of DPS facilities and the treatment of civilian/administrative employees' absences from work during periods of inclement weather and other emergencies (i.e., natural disasters, terrorist attacks, disease outbreaks, etc.).

5.19.2 Policy

This policy outlines the plan of action and establishes guidelines regarding employee absences from work duty because of severe weather conditions or other emergencies.

The below guidelines for severe weather conditions and other emergencies are in accordance with State Personnel Board Rule 16, Office of Planning and Budget and State Merit System Memorandum for Payment of Overtime and Granting of Compensatory Time (March 6, 2000), and Policy for Emergency response and Subsequent Overtime Compensation (September 7, 2005).

5.19.3 Severe Weather Notification

- A. The GEMA Liaison Officer will serve as the designated Department of Public Safety (DPS) contact with the Georgia Emergency Management Agency (GEMA). The GEMA Liaison can assist local supervisors with emergency contact information for their assigned areas.
- B. Upon notification from GEMA of the existence of a severe weather condition that could adversely affect any DPS unit, the GEMA Liaison will notify the following:
 - 1. Commissioner's Office;
 - 2. Deputy Commissioner's Office;
 - 3. GSP Commanding Officer;
 - 4. CVE Commanding Officer, and
 - 5. DPS offices located in the threatened area.

5.19.4 Essential Employees

Essential employees are individuals whose duties become even more important during inclement weather or other emergency situations, and who must report to work despite state office closures. Employees are designated essential or deemed essential due to unusual circumstances within the discretion of the agency head.

A. Essential Employees are:

1. All Sworn Employees
2. Dispatchers
3. Safety Officers
4. Cadets
5. Any other employee designated as essential by their Division Director based upon the circumstances of current inclement weather or other emergency situation.
6. Civilian Division Directors are expected to remain on call during state closures.

5.19.5 DPS Headquarters Complex – Plan of Action

Employee and visitor assembly points in the event of a tornado or other dangerous weather condition are the hallway located outside the Communications Center, the Overweight Citation Unit's break room, the old garage and the old radio room. Employees and visitors will proceed to these areas when so directed and will remain in these areas until notified that it has been deemed safe to return to their work units.

5.19.6 Other DPS Offices – Plan of Action

Supervisors of work units located outside the Headquarters complex will identify a location within their office facility to which employees and visitors will assemble in the event of a tornado or other dangerous weather condition.

- A. The assembly location must be in the lowest floor of the structure, as near the center as possible, and away from the windows and outside doors.
- B. Employees will assemble and remain in the designated area as required.

5.19.7 Office Closings

- A. During times of inclement weather conditions or other emergencies, the Office of the Governor will determine which geographical areas are affected and notify television and radio stations of state office closings.
- B. In metropolitan Atlanta, official announcements will be made by the Governor through television broadcast Station WSB (ABC) Channel 2, and radio station WSB 750 AM and WSB 95.5 FM.
- C. In areas outside the metro-Atlanta area, local radio stations that are part of the Peach State Public Radio Network will carry official announcements. DPS offices outside the metro-Atlanta will identify appropriate network member stations in their areas and communicate specific tuning information (or other numbers to call) to employees in their offices.

- D. Announcements on other stations are not considered official and may not be accurate. In the absence of official notification, employees are expected to report to work on time.

5.19.8 Treatment of Absences

- A. Employees in the affected geographical areas will not have to take leave for the period of time the offices were closed by the Governor's Office. Employees should count such time as "other leave" when completing their timesheets in the Leave Accounting System (LAS).
- B. Employees who arrive at work after the Governor's appointed starting time must make up the time by utilizing their available leave or compensatory time or shall be unpaid. For example, if the Governor's Office directs employees to report to work at 10:00 a.m., an employee who reports to work at 10:00 a.m. will not have to take any leave. An employee who reports to work at 11:00 a.m. must utilize one of the absence from duty options to account for one hour of time.
- C. Employees who leave work early due to weather conditions before the official closing by the Governor's Office must make up the time by utilizing their available leave or compensatory time or shall be unpaid. For example, an employee who leaves work early at 1:00 p.m. due to weather conditions must account for 2 hours if the Governor's Office closed the offices at 3:00 p.m. If the Governor does not close the offices, the employee must use one of the absence for duty options to account for the time off, the same as a regular business day.
- D. Employees who do not report to work as scheduled in anticipation of inclement weather will utilize one of the absence from duty options for their full work day, regardless of the time employees were directed to report to work or leave from work.
- E. Employees who were scheduled to take leave on a day closed by the Governor's Office will be charged for the number of hours they had requested, regardless of whether they were able to keep their appointments.
- F. Employees who leave work for reasons other than the weather (previously scheduled doctor's appointment, etc.) prior to the official closing will be charged leave from the time of their departure to the regular close of business, the same as a regular business day.
- G. If employees are on a nine (9) or ten (10) hour work schedule, and were scheduled to work on a day the Governor closed the offices, employees will not be charged for the extra one or two hours of time, as they are when they are out for a holiday.
- H. Employees who are not directly affected by the conditions above, or who are not scheduled to work during such times, shall not accrue any right to, and shall not be compensated in any manner for any absence that may be authorized or equivalent time off. For example, employees who remain at work past the official closing time or report to work prior to the official opening time are not entitled to additional compensation or equivalent time off.
- I. Employees who are required to work additional time because of the closing of an office or facility shall be compensated under the Office of Planning and Budget Policy for Emergency Response and Subsequent Overtime Compensation.
- J. If the Commissioner closes an office prior to the Governor's closing, these same guidelines will be applied to the Commissioner's closing.

5.19.9 Absence from Duty

Employees who are absent from duty because of severe weather conditions or other temporary emergencies, without the closure of their State office, will be required by their supervisor to:

- A. Make up the time lost from work. The make-up time for employees covered by the provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act, and in accordance with State Personnel Board Rule 18.903.1.a, must be completed during the same workweek. The make-up time for employees exempt from the Fair Labor Standards Act must be completed no later than 15 work days after the absence; or
- B. Charge the period of absence to accrued compensatory time, annual leave, holiday time, or personal leave; or
- C. Be placed on leave without pay for the period of the absence if none of the above options are available.