

Hazardous Weather and Emergency Closing Procedure Supplement to Board Policy EBCE – Emergency Closing

Scope

This policy applies to all District 51 employees and covers closures in the event of hazardous weather or other emergencies that threaten the safety, health, or welfare of students or employees.

Objective

The objective of this procedure is to assist employees in interpreting school closure announcements, clarify work schedules and explain impacts on pay.

Procedure

District 51 is committed to the safety and security of its students, teachers, support staff, and visitors. As a result, decisions about whether schools should close or remain open are based on overall concern for the school community.

Closure of Schools and Administrative Offices

If hazardous weather conditions or emergency closings arise or are anticipated that might make it inadvisable to operate schools on a given day, the Superintendent may, at his/her discretion, close schools and/or administrative offices.

Employees are expected to use their best judgment in assessing the travel risk of commuting to and from work based on individual circumstances. Those who believe that the road conditions from home are dangerous are urged and even expected to stay home to prevent injury.

Notification: In the event of hazardous weather or emergency closure, the district webpage will include a banner at the top of the page displaying information about delay, cancellation, or closure decisions for the schools and administrative offices. District Facebook (@schooldistrict51) and Twitter (@district51) will have posts with the most updated information for all audiences. In addition, local news stations will broadcast delay and/or cancellation information and post the information on their websites and social media pages. In order to be as clear and consistent as possible, the following uniform statements will be used in case of hazardous weather or emergency closing messages:

1. **All D51 Schools and Administrative Offices are closed; only essential personnel are required to report to work.**
What it means: School-based and administrative office employees are **not** to report to work. Only identified emergency response staff are required to report to work. Emergency response staff will be paid one and one half (1 ½) times their regular rate of pay for the hours actually worked during this time. An emergency response employee who is required to report to work but is unable to do so should immediately contact his/her supervisor. All other employees who were ready and able to work will be compensated for a normal workday.
2. **All D51 Schools and Administrative Offices are operating on a two-hour delayed start. School staff and Administration should report to work with enough time to accept students.**
What it means: Schools will open after the regular opening time for students. The delay time will be specified in the announcement (usually two hours). Employees should arrive at their work site as close to the normal starting time as is safely possible and early enough to receive students. Essential personnel staff may be required to come in early to prep buildings for opening. If required, they will be paid one and one half (1 ½) times their regular rate of pay for the hours actually worked during this time. All other employees who were ready and able to work will be compensated for the delay in alignment with their normal workday. If an employee is unable to get to work or report at the scheduled time, they may opt to use accrued vacation, personal leave, or take leave without pay.
3. **Early dismissal of schools.**
What it means: Schools will close at a designated time. In the event the decision is made to close schools and administrative offices early, all employees will be compensated as if it was a normal workday. Those employees who are located in schools should plan to stay until all children are seen safely on their way home.

Hazardous Weather or Emergency Closing Communication Plan

Once the Superintendent has made a decision to alter the schedule of a particular day, the following communication plan will be activated:

- Supervisors will contact direct reports. When schools are closed, the message will remind employees of those who are identified as essential personnel and required to work during that period of school closures/delays. The message will encourage all employees to use their best judgment in traveling.
- The Communications Department will post a message on the district website, district social media accounts, and inform local media outlets. The message posted on the website will encourage all students/parents and employees to use their best judgment in traveling.
- The Communications Department will also send an email, text message and/or phone call out to staff and parents using SchoolMessenger. ***Staff must opt-in to the D51 text messaging system by testing YES to 67587 in order to receive text message alerts.***

Responsibilities

The Chief Operations Officer, Director of Safety and Security, and Superintendent are charged with recognizing hazardous weather or other environmental factors that have the potential to disrupt the normal course of school. They will gather information sufficient to form a recommendation for action and will confer with the Superintendent's Office.

The Superintendent or designee will decide which course of action to take with regard to postponing/closing schools or administrative offices, and canceling/postponing district activities or events in the event of hazardous weather or other emergency closings.

Should the Superintendent decide to delay or close schools, staff will receive communications in the following ways:

- A text message will be sent to all staff with information pertaining to the delay or closure. ***To receive text messages from the District, you must opt in by texting YES to 67587.***
- Staff will also receive an email via their D51 email address. ***Please note:*** If you do not have access to your work email address outside of work, please be sure you have opted in to receive District text messages.
- Building administration can determine if they would like to put a phone tree in place in their specific building.

If you are not classified as Essential or Emergency Response Personnel and a Snow Day Closure is called, you are not to report to work. If there is a Snow Delay, we encourage you to use your best judgment while traveling.

The Communications Department will provide guidance for consistent information and will be responsible for submitting and posting correct and accurate information about school and event cancellations or closures to the following sources:

- Local News, including: Radio and Television
- Social Media: Facebook (@schooldistrict51) and Twitter (@district51)
- District Website: www.d51schools.org
- School Messenger

Each October, the Communications Department will issue a Hazardous Weather and Emergency Closing reminder to all employees via email. The department will also post the reminder on the Human Resources website and District Staff Connect site. Continuous information on Hazardous Weather procedures will be provided to staff throughout the winter months.

Definitions:

- ***Administrative offices:*** BTK, Central Office, Compass, Emerson
- ***Essential Personnel/Emergency Response Staff:*** An employee who works in an emergency response function such as those responsible for snow removal or storm clean-up may be required to work during school delayed starts or closures. ***Please note: Essential Personnel/Emergency Response staff may vary depending on the situation and will be notified by their supervisor if required to report during a delayed start or closure.***

HAZARDOUS WEATHER

Who makes the decision to call a Snow Delay or Snow Day Closure for D51?
• Superintendent • Assistant Superintendent • Director of Safety & Security • Chief Operations Officer • Director of Maintenance

Essential personnel/Emergency Response staff for hazardous weather includes the following:
• Grounds Workers • Director of Maintenance ◦ Maintenance Coordinator ◦ Maintenance workers (At supervisor discretion) • Custodians ◦ During a Snow Delay Custodians <u>should</u> report to work at their normal time. During a Snow Closure Custodians <u>should report to work when it becomes safe to do so.</u> • Director of Safety and Security ◦ Security Officers (At supervisor discretion) • Principals (At site director discretion) • School Secretaries (At supervisor discretion)

EMERGENCY CLOSURES

Who makes the decision to call an Emergency Closure for D51 buildings?
• Superintendent • Assistant Superintendent • Director of Safety & Security • Chief Operations Officer • Director of Maintenance • Chief Academic Officer • Site Directors • Principals

Essential personnel/Emergency response staff for Emergency Closures may include the following:
• Grounds Workers • Director of Maintenance ◦ Maintenance Coordinator ◦ Maintenance Workers (At supervisor discretion) • Custodians • Director of Safety and Security ◦ Security Officers (At supervisor discretion) • Superintendent • Assistant Superintendent • Principals • School Secretaries (At supervisor discretion)

Emergency response function: A function that has been designated as essential to the continued and safe operation of the district.

Hazardous weather: Environmental factors such as snowstorms, floods, ice, high wind, fire, lightning, earthquake, etc.

Leave Options: Employees who are required to report to work but choose to stay home because of hazardous weather or emergency closings may use accrued vacation, personal leave or leave without pay to cover the work time missed. Use of accrued sick leave is appropriate only in the case of illness. In cases in which employees do not have sufficient leave to cover the unexpected absence, supervisors are encouraged to allow employees to make up the time, if operational needs permit.

Please advise, current policy allows for 2 (two) closures per school year without make-up days. If make-up days are required, they will be added as necessary.