Policy Title: Adverse Events		
Number: 043	Effective Date: 10/01/2025	Revision Date: 08/02/2025

Purpose

The policy applies to all Burke County employees and addresses how the County will compensate employees during an adverse event (weather or other public safety circumstance).

General Statement

Burke County is called upon to address various events (weather related, emergency situations, public health issues, etc.) which may cause non-essential employees to miss work due to closure of select County services/departments. Many County employees are designated as essential personnel for such events and periods of closure that may occur and are expected to work, albeit perhaps in ways that are not "normal". Clarity of thought process is essential for employees to make personal decisions relating to reporting for work during such unusual situations.

Guidelines

Whether Burke County government offices are open or closed, employees are encouraged to use their judgement to determine their safety needs during severe weather or other events and act accordingly.

Employees must notify their supervisor prior to leaving work early during their normal schedule to avoid severe weather or other conditions.

Employees who cannot report to work due to weather or other adverse conditions must notify their supervisor as soon as possible before the beginning of their shift and report to work when safety permits.

For the purposes of this policy, normal County operating hours are Monday – Friday, 8:00 am – 5:00 pm. Closures relating to adverse events are based on hours within this schedule. Departments that operate outside of this schedule and have closure due to adverse events are typically not considered in the accrual of adverse time.

Definitions

Adverse Event– Typically a temporary closure of County facilities or departments due to an event (snow, ice, wildfire, flooding, facility operational issues, etc.) which may create adverse conditions or safety concerns. Such closures of County offices will be determined and announced by the County Manager.

Essential Personnel – For the purpose of this section essential personnel is defined as County employees that are required to work to maintain essential operations, as defined by their department head or County Manager, and/or employees that are required/authorized to perform specialized work during periods of closure. Department Heads make the determination as to which positions and employees, if any, are considered "essential personnel." Typically, public safety personnel - 911, Sheriff's Office, Detention Center, EMS and Fire Marshall employees are considered essential personnel.

Pay Parameters

Non-essential Personnel.

When County offices are closed due to inclement weather or other event, non-essential regular full time and regular part time (benefitted) employees will receive compensation to make their pay "whole" for the pay period in which a closure occurs. "Whole" in this context means that the employee will be held harmless against loss of wages due to the closure which results in the employee working less than their normal weekly base number of hours, in most cases 40 hours per week. BY way of example, if the employee actually worked 39 hours in that pay week, the employee will receive 1 hour of adverse pay, making their pay "whole" to the 40 hours total, even though the closure may have been for more than 1 hour.

Employees who had previously scheduled PTO are not eligible for Adverse time that falls on that PTO day.

Employees on FMLA or Leave without Pay are not eligible for Adverse time that falls within their window of leave.

Essential Personnel.

Essential personnel who are scheduled to work during the closure will be ~~paid~~ compensated for actual hours worked. ~~and will additionally be paid the applicable amount of adverse pay for the number of hours of the closure as determined by the County Manager.~~ At the discretion of the County Manager or his/her designee, additional compensation may be considered for those employees who are required to work during an Adverse Event. Additional compensation is not guaranteed, and determination of additional compensation might include, but not be limited to, reviewing of the following criteria:

- How long was the closure?
- Did the County operate the Emergency Operations Center (EOC)? If so, for how long was the EOC operational?
- Did the County issue a State of Emergency?
- What was the severity of the event?
- What unusual duties, requirements or functions did those essential employees have during the event in addition to normal duties?

Compensation for Adverse Events is not pay for hours worked and therefore is not included in calculations for overtime premium or compensatory time as may apply.

Adverse Event when County offices remain open.

When County offices remain open for business, all employees are expected to report for their scheduled shift. Due to reasonable discretionary judgment of the employee as to whether it is safe for them to travel to work during an Adverse Event when County offices remain open for business, an employee who does not work their scheduled hours must use 'leave' in order to be paid for the hours not worked. Leave usage will be in the following order:

- compensatory (comp) time
- vacation leave may be used if compensatory time is exhausted

- if no leave available, employee will be unpaid for those hours missed.