

POLICY

It is the policy of the Branch to maintain its normal schedule of operations whenever reasonably possible. There may be occasions, however, when normal operations must be temporarily suspended or curtailed because of extremely adverse external conditions such as inclement weather or other emergencies. Decisions concerning the suspension or curtailment of operations will be made by the appropriate Judicial Branch authority, as outlined below, and communicated to employees through their supervisor or the media, as necessary.

GENERAL INFORMATION

I. Total statewide cancellation of operations prior to or during normal working hours.

When adverse weather or other emergency conditions throughout the state force the cancellation of all judicial operations statewide, the Office of the Chief Court Administrator (O.C.C.A.) will notify the following:

1. Administrative Judges
2. Division Executive Directors
3. The media

Judges, staff and jurors will receive notification of total shutdowns prior to working hours through the media. The O.C.C.A. will also endeavor to disseminate such information by personal contact through the chain of command.

Announcements made by the Governor concerning the release of state employees from work, the closing of Executive Branch departments or the delayed reporting of non-essential state employees do not apply to Judicial Branch employees, unless the Governor has declared a state of emergency.

Judicial employees should listen for announcements from Judicial Branch authorities concerning suspension of normal work schedules.

II. Local Options Prior To or During Normal Working Hours

Conditions often vary greatly throughout the state during adverse weather. When approval for local options is given by the Chief Court Administrator, each Administrative Judge will decide which action is appropriate for that particular Judicial District and will immediately notify the

Chief Court Administrator orally of the option taken. Thereafter, the action taken will be confirmed in writing.

The following options are available if adverse weather conditions are known prior to normal working hours:

1. Normal operations.
2. Normal operations, except for jury trials. Administrative Judge may, if appropriate, notify the local media, and the Juror Information Line will be used.
3. Emergency arraignments and juvenile detention hearings only. Administrative Judge will contact judges and personnel to inform them of the decision and may, if appropriate, contact local media.
4. Total local shutdown. Administrative Judge will notify judges assigned to the judicial district and other personnel and may, if appropriate, notify local media.

In the event that operations are maintained at specified levels, in spite of inclement weather conditions, employees who are required to report to work but are late because of the weather conditions, will not be penalized or charged for such lateness provided they have made a good faith effort to arrive at their duty station on time and they report such conditions to their supervisor immediately upon arrival.

III. Early Dismissal During Normal Working Hours

The authority for determining the timing, the extent, and the notification procedures of early dismissals will rest with the Administrative Judge upon consultation with, and approval of, the Chief Court Administrator.

PROCEDURES

Depending upon the circumstances and the hour of the day, notification of closing will be either by the media or telephone. Announcements concerning cessation of operations or operations with reduced staff complements occurring during the business day will be made by supervisors.

With respect to individual employees, it is the responsibility of each employee to notify the individual's supervisor as soon as possible of the situation causing the employee's late arrival, and to actually arrive at the individual's duty station as soon as possible. Failure to meet these requirements will result in a charge for the time.