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## **EMERGENCY CLOSING (Severe Weather) POLICY**

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### **PURPOSE**

The following policy is intended to ensure a consistent and uniform approach across all Town Departments when the Town Administrator determines that non-emergency services will be reduced or cancelled.

It is the policy of the Town of Acushnet to maintain regularly-scheduled work hours at Town Hall except for conditions that would adversely affect the safety of employees. In doing so, the Board recognizes weighing the need to have Town Hall open to serve the public, against the potential for personal injury associated with travel during severe weather.

### **APPLICABILITY:**

This policy applies to general government management, administrative and support personnel, regardless of work location. It does not apply to Police and Fire personnel, essential Highway Department personnel and essential call-in personnel. Essential personnel are defined by the department head and/or the Town Administrator or his or her designee and may change for each situation.

### **POLICY**

#### **A. ABSENCE FROM WORK DUE TO WEATHER WHEN TOWN OPERATIONS ARE NOT REDUCED/CANCELLED**

All employees are expected to be present at work regardless of weather conditions unless they request and are granted appropriate leave. If an emergency situation occurs before or during the morning commute hours, employees should take a reasonable amount of time necessary to arrive at work safely. Employees who prefer to use accumulated vacation or sick time, instead of reporting to work, are allowed to do so. In general, if the Acushnet Public Schools close or have a delayed opening as a result of the weather, Town employees may use up to one extra hour in the morning beyond their normal start time to ensure a safe arrival at work, without loss of pay or use of accumulated leave time.

Unless the municipal building is closed by the Town Administrator or his/her designee, employees who do not report to work at all must use their vacation or



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- sick time for all hours they were scheduled to work for the day.
- B. EARLY DEPARTURE FROM WORK

The Town Administrator, in consultation Department Heads, will monitor weather conditions and assess the need for the continuation of routine Town operations.

Early departures from work for personnel due to weather conditions will be authorized by the Town Administrator.

The Town Administrator will communicate the authorization to dismiss personnel to all departments.

Department Heads are not authorized to dismiss personnel due to weather conditions, before authorization, without a charge to appropriate sick or vacation time, except in extenuating circumstances. Leave taken by an employee to depart early will not be restored if a subsequent early departure or closing is authorized.

Employees who are on scheduled paid time off or lunch with a scheduled return time after early release is authorized will receive pay for the early release. Department Heads will attempt to notify the employees not to return to work.

If non-exempt employees are required to remain at work or report to work after the municipal building in which they work has been closed, they will be entitled to receive compensation at time and one-half after the designation.

- C. DELAY OR CANCELLATION OF WORK FOR NON-EMERGENCY EMPLOYEES PRIOR TO THE START OF THE WORK DAY MONDAY THROUGH FRIDAY

It is the policy of the Town of Acushnet to compensate employees who cannot report for work when the municipal building they work in is closed due to an emergency situation.

The Town Administrator and Department Heads, will monitor weather conditions and assess the need to delay or cancel non-emergency Town operations due to severe weather.

Delay or cancellation of non-emergency operations will be authorized by the



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Town Administrator based on weather conditions. Any such decision will be made as early as feasible.

Employees on vacation, sick or personal leave, or otherwise not scheduled to work during the affected period are not eligible to be paid under this policy. If the municipal building is not closed by the Town Administrator, employees who do not report to work at all may receive compensation if they choose to use vacation time or sick time.

Delays or cancellation notification will be made by the Town Administrator, or other designee, by phone. The decision will be communicated to the Highway Department and the Police Department. The decision to close non-essential operations shall be posted on the Town's website at [www.acushnet.ma.us](http://www.acushnet.ma.us).

D. DELAY, CANCELLATION OR EARLY DEPARTURE OF WORK FOR SENIOR CENTER, LIBRARY AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT EMPLOYEES ON EVENINGS, WEEKENDS, AND HOLIDAYS

The Council on Aging Director, Recreation Director, and the Library Director will determine if operations in their respective departments should be delayed, cancelled or curtailed due to weather on evenings, weekends and holidays and notify the employees concerned as early as possible.

The Town Administrator should be notified of any such action, but need not be consulted except under unusual circumstances.

**Approved by the BOARD OF SELECTMEN**

**Date: 2/6/2017**