

CAYUGA COUNTY POLICY MANUAL
Section 15A

Policy Title: Cayuga County Government Emergency Closing

Subject: Emergency Closing

Effective Date: 9-27-18

Resolution No.: 344-18

Objective: Clarify protocol for modifying normal operations during inclement weather, or other emergencies as they relate to closing of County Government Offices

Statement & Purpose:

This policy / procedure provides a framework and protocol for modifying normal operations during seasonal inclement weather, or other emergencies as they relate to closing of County Government offices, buildings, and/or publicly available services.

The development of this policy and these procedures have been guided by the belief that the County Government is an essential organization within the Cayuga County community and as such is normally open during periods of ordinary seasonal inclement weather or other minor disruptions.

The Cayuga County Government equally values the safety and lives of all staff and faculty, while recognizing that we must maintain the effective operation of the Government during inclement weather and other disruptions when possible.

Introduction:

An emergency closing of Cayuga County Government will be implemented only under severe and extreme circumstances. Every effort will be made to maintain services and all employees are expected to report to work unless they specifically advised otherwise. When safety conditions and/or a declared state of emergency due to other factors warrants, the County Government Administration may implement an emergency closing of all or part of the Government.

Scope and Application:

This Policy shall apply to exempt and non-exempt staff, elected and appointed staff, administrative staff, part-time staff, customers, visitors, and persons or companies doing business with Cayuga County.

Policy:

The decision to close the Cayuga County Government buildings, offices, and services during inclement / emergent weather conditions shall be a consultative process. A core advisory group (CAG), which includes the Chair of the Legislature, County Administrator, the Sheriff, the Director of Emergency Services, and the Highway Superintendent, or "their designees" shall make up the CAG. The CAG can be expanded to include additional staff members as necessary at the discretion of the County Administrator.

The Chair of the Legislature, in consult with the County Administrator will have the final authority to make the decision to close any or all parts of the County Government.

Department heads and supervisors are responsible for assuring the employees who report to them are aware of this policy and understand the general procedure and any internal departmental procedures for emergency closing. Employees are responsible for contacting their supervisors if they are unclear as to the status of the Government's operation or their need to report to work.

Departments with operations involving external groups (e.g., contractors, vendor run operations, etc.) will communicate with these groups regarding the action the County Government is taking.

General Process:

The Sheriff will consult / coordinate with the “on duty” road patrol supervisor and the Highway Superintendent to establish a recommendation for the County Administrator.

The County Administrator or “designee” will consult with the Legislative Chair and make a closure decision.

The County Administrator or “designee” will notify Emergency Services and Chief Information Officer or designee to facilitate staff notifications and web postings.

The County Administrator or “designee” will access television media closing notification scroll and issue applicable press release to all media outlets advising of the closure. Accessing the television media closing notification scroll may be assigned to an alternate person (CAG or other) if deemed necessary for timeliness.

It is incumbent upon Department Heads to develop an internal mechanism with their supervisors and staff to ensure that all staff are made aware of this policy, applicable procedures, encouraged to leverage the County Mass Notification system, and generally know where to look / find appropriate closing notifications.

Communications When Modifying Normal Operations:

Once the decision to close and/or modify operations of the County buildings is made, all appropriate individuals will be notified through all applicable means, which includes, but is not limited to:

- Cayuga County Mass Notification System push notification – This system is housed and maintained in Emergency Services. It is an opt-in system, and employees are encouraged to sign up for this system to ensure they receive notifications. The mass notification system capabilities include text messaging to County mobile device and personal mobile device, email to County email and personal email, a computer generated phone call to County cellular device, personal cellular device, and home phone. This system also has available provisions for hearing impaired (TTY/TTD) systems.
- An email to all County employees with access to their County email.
- Posting on the Cayuga County web site home page (www.cayugacounty.us)
- Posting by all Department heads (or applicable designee) to all County social media feeds (Facebook, Twitter, etc.).
- Television Media Stations with closing / notification scrolling messages, to include:
 - Syracuse Television channel(s) – 3 (WSTM), 5 (WTVH), CW6 (WSTQ), 9 (WSYR), and 10 (Spectrum News)
 - Rochester Television Channel(s) – 8 (WROC), 10 (WHEC), and 13 (WHAM)
- Press release to all applicable media outlets (predominantly for public notification, given the potential delays in broadcast or print media).
- The 911 Center may be called upon to access the Reverse 911 in extreme circumstances, or where other methods are impaired or inaccessible.

Efforts to ensure all applicable means of notification of closure occur at least one (1) hour before the decision takes effect, earlier if possible.

Identification of Essential Employees:

As of the date of release of this Policy / Procedure, Essential Employees’ shall include, but is not limited to:

- Those Departments with responsibility for public safety, including the Sheriff's Department, County Jail, 911, Highway Department, and Emergency Services.
- Those Departments with the responsibility to keep County Facilities open during a time of public closure (Sheriff's Facility, Jail Facility, Highway Facility, County Office Building Emergency Operations Center & Back-up 911 Center)

It is incumbent upon Department Heads and Supervisory staff to know what services their Department is required by law or statute to be considered "essential" and/or ensure that, consistent with the laws or statutes, that their services are and/or remain available during a closure. To that end, Departments that believe that they are essential, based on law or statute, and not included in the essential public safety departments listed, must review their status with the County Administrator for inclusion.

Operational Definitions for this Policy / Procedure:

Essential Employees' – Employees' identified within this policy / procedure relative to public safety and facilities. Employees' of Departments having statutory responsibility to the public at all times, not otherwise identified here in. Others to be identified necessary and/or essential by the County Administrator.

Non-Essential Employees' – Employees' not otherwise identified in this Policy / Procedure.

Roads Closed Except for Emergency Travel – Per the Sheriff's Office Road Restriction Guidelines 2.0, issued March 6, 2018, travel is restricted to emergency vehicles and those performing an emergency act. All other travel, including to and from work, is prohibited and strict enforcement will be in effect.

No Unnecessary Travel – Per the Sheriff's Office Road Restriction Guidelines 2.0, issued March 6, 2018, hazardous conditions exist, but the decision to drive is left to the discretion of the traveler. If roads are wet or snow is present, drive with extra regard for your speed and those around you especially on curves, hills, and bridges which usually freeze well before the rest of the roadway. Be sure to give yourself plenty of stopping distance especially on icy roads.

Travel Advisory – Per the Sheriff's Office Road Restriction Guidelines 2.0, issued March 6, 2018, motorists are encouraged to use caution.