



Emergency Closure Policy

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1. **Purpose**

In order to fulfill its mission of public service, Buncombe County will make every reasonable effort to open its facilities to the public as scheduled, consistent with safe access for staff and the public. Whenever the County Manager determines that the health and safety of the community would be placed at risk or that conditions or events prevent performance of regular operations, a decision will be made regarding the office hours of County offices.

2. **Applicability**

This policy applies to all Buncombe County departments and employees. Where there is conflict with any department-specific policy, this document will supersede.

3. **Policy**

During emergencies affecting the County's operations, including those during severe weather, the County Manager will decide to fully close, remain open, delay opening, close early, or reduce services.

For the purpose of this policy, and to calculate Emergency Closure Pay or Safety Critical Response hours, the County's regular business hours are Monday through Saturday, 8am – 5pm.

3.1. Department Directors will work with the County Manager (or an Assistant County Manager) to determine which employees are needed for Safety Critical Response. Those employees will be required to report to a Buncombe County office to work regardless of the County Manager's office hour decisions. Those employees that report to work as required per this policy, will receive Safety Critical Response Hours for required work hours that coincide with the number of hours the County is closed or delayed. This is banked time that will expire 1 year from the date it is received and may not be sold/converted to cash.

3.2. All other employees will work only when the County is open for operations. If an employee's work hours coincide with the standard County hours stated above, they will receive Emergency Closure Pay for the number of hours the County was closed that coincide with the employee's scheduled hours. If an employee's work hours do not coincide with the standard County hours stated above, the employee will only receive the number of hours of Emergency Closure Pay for the hours that coincide with the time the County was closed.

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3.3. If the County has a full closure, delayed opening, early closure, or reduction of services on a day an employee is scheduled to be off or is not scheduled to work, the employee is not eligible for Emergency Closure Pay or Safety Critical Response Hours.

4. Policy Non-Compliance

Employees willfully violating the terms and conditions of this policy may be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

5. Audit

All policies for Buncombe County may be subject to audit or review as outlined in the [Internal Auditor’s Statement](#).

6. Definitions

- 6.1. Delayed Start - The decision to delay the start of the work day based on the County’s regular business hours.
- 6.2. Early Closure- The decision to send employees home prior to the end of the County’s regular business day (5pm).
- 6.3. Emergency - An unforeseen combination of circumstances or an urgent need for immediate action, including but not limited to natural disasters, inclement weather, lack of heating, cooling, plumbing and power outages.
- 6.4. Inclement Weather - Weather that is physically severe including but not limited to snow, ice, and flooding and other hazardous conditions such as tornadoes.
- 6.5. Safety Critical Response – Employees within certain departments in Buncombe County that are either state/federally mandated or needed to report to work to ensure the direct safety of the community.

7. Approval and Revision History

Policy Origination Date:	December 5, 2017
Requires Board Approval:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Board Approval Date:	Click for Date
Revision History:	1/16/2018 Original Document 10/28/2022 revised to designate safety critical response and the allocation of safety critical response hours vs emergency closure pay

8. Background

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