

Frequently Asked Questions on Declared Emergencies or Disaster Situations

What Personnel Rule addresses how pay and leave will be handled for classified service employees when regular County operations are completely or partially closed due to an emergency?

Refer to [Personnel Rule 3. Compensation, Section D.6.](#)

What is the guiding philosophy behind how classified employees are compensated during emergencies?

Our citizens depend on employees to serve them during emergencies. Before, during and/or after an emergency or catastrophe, all County employees will have a role in addressing the situation. In other words, responding to emergency situations is part of our job as public servants of Pinellas County. However, we must play different roles and not everyone is needed during the preparation or early phase of an emergency. Those who are needed early on (Phase 1) are expected to report to work and will be compensated for doing so. Due to the nature of emergencies; however, it is best for those who are needed later to be out of the way to avoid impeding emergency operations. Furthermore, it is their opportunity to prepare for it personally and for their family so they can be available when called later on. Because those individuals are directed not to report during their regularly scheduled work time, they are granted leave with pay.

What is the difference between “regular” County operations being “fully” opened, “partially” opened, or “suspended”? Don’t we have 24/7 operations that always remain open?

Pinellas County does have 24/7 operations and even some that aren't that may remain open during a declared emergency when “regular” operations are closed. In situations when the Board of County Commissioners declares a state of emergency and/or the Appointing Authorities close County operations due to an emergency or disaster situation, the County is not considered “partially” open. It is considered closed and the provisions of the [rule](#) pertaining to those conditions apply.

How are classified employees compensated who must work during the period of time “regular” operations are closed?

Such employees receive pay at the overtime rate of 1.5 hours for each hour worked.

What if I worked outside of my regularly scheduled hours?

You would still receive pay at the overtime rate for all hours worked during the period of emergency operations when regular operations are closed. There is no other additional pay for hours worked outside your normally scheduled hours unless you work an after-hours shift for more than 4 consecutive calendar weeks.

At what point do I start earning the overtime rate for working during the emergency?

The rate is effective during the time the County's "regular" operations are officially closed. For example, if the County closed for a full day, Wednesday, hours worked between midnight Wednesday morning to midnight Wednesday evening would be paid at the overtime rate.

What about employees who are sent home when the County's "regular" operations are closed. Do they get paid?

Yes. They receive Leave with Pay (LWP) for the number of hours they were normally scheduled to work that day. So an 8-hour day employee would receive 8 LWP while a 10-hour employee would receive 10 LWP. Remember, we are trying to keep these employees out of harm's way and out of the way of emergency operations until they are needed by temporarily asking them not to report to work.

What if a classified employee works for a part of the day County operations are officially closed for less than 8 hours? What happens then?

The employee would be paid the overtime rate for hours worked and Leave with Pay for the remainder of hours in his/her normal tour of duty. For example, an 8-hour day employee working 3 hours on a day "regular" operations are closed would receive 3 hours overtime pay and 5 hours LWP.

What if I was scheduled for a day of Annual Leave or approved to take a Floating Holiday on the day "regular" operations are closed. Will I still be charged leave for that day?

No. You will be credited with LWP for your normally scheduled hours for that day.

I was not scheduled to work on the day operations were closed. Will I get LWP?

No. LWP is only granted to employees scheduled to work for that day who have been instructed not to report. If you were not scheduled to work, that day will be reflected as it normally is — a non-work day.

What if regular County operations are not closed and the County is "partially open". How do classified employees get compensated then?

Employees working under these circumstances are paid at their regular rates for hours worked up to and including 40. All time worked beyond the 40 hour work week (or 80 hours for classified/excluded employees) will be compensated at the overtime rates of pay either in cash or compensatory time at the discretion of the Appointing Authority or designee.

What about those who volunteer for or are asked to work in the Citizens' Information Center (CIC)? How do they get paid?

As noted in [Personnel Rule 3, D.5](#), employees working in the CIC receive their regular pay in situations where their CIC shift falls during their normally scheduled work time and work days and the County operations are continuing as usual. If the assigned CIC hours fall outside the normally scheduled work time or work days, the CIC employee will be compensated at the overtime rate, regardless of the actual number of hours worked in the week.

Some of this sounds different from what I've heard before. Have these guidelines and practices changed over the years?

Yes. As we have learned both from trial and error as well as consulting other organizations' best practices, we have refined ours in order to effectively address as many situations and variables as possible. Because these variables at times conflict, we strive to achieve the best possible balance for all concerned.

What if my supervisor sends me home during normal work hours to prepare my home and family and I'm supposed to come back to work. Do I get paid for that time?

If you are directed to leave work for that purpose, you must immediately return to work once you have completed your preparations. In this case, you will receive administrative leave with pay for your time away. If, however, you were simply allowed to go home in order to rest for an upcoming adjusted tour of duty, you will not be compensated for that time. For example, if you were asked to report to work from 2 p.m. to 11 p.m. on a day when you might normally work 8-5, you would get paid for working 8 hours (at overtime rate if applicable for the emergency) but you would not receive LWP for the time you were not at work.

I ended up working extra hours for a couple of days before and during the emergency. For example, I worked 10 hours on Tuesday and 12 hours on Wednesday. Will I get paid overtime for that?

Not necessarily. If it meets the emergency criteria (the Board of County Commissioners declares a state of emergency or an Appointing Authority closes County operations due to an emergency or disaster situation), you will be paid at the overtime rate. However, if the County was open or partially open, you would not be eligible for overtime until your hours worked for the week exceeded 40. Remember this is considered part of your regular duties. In this situation, management has the right to direct you to adjust your work schedule for the remainder of the week so that you do not exceed 40 hours or to reduce your number of overtime hours.

Will I receive overtime pay or compensatory time?

The decision on whether or not to pay overtime or compensatory time is usually at management's discretion. It is a decision that must be balanced between operational needs to have people in the workplace and the amount of funds available. This is always the case in non-emergency situations. In situations, however, when there is a declared emergency, the County may be eligible for reimbursement for overtime paid from the Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA). Therefore, in these circumstances, all overtime worked is to be paid. There is no discretion.

What if the declared emergency falls on a holiday?

Classified service employees required to work during an emergency (when County operations are closed) on a recognized County Holiday will be paid for such time in accordance with [Personnel Rule 4, Section A.3.a.](#)

I was on official business traveling outside of the area when the County was declared closed for an emergency. I attended training on that day. Will I get paid overtime or receive additional LWP?

You will get paid at your regular rate for hours worked that day. It will be treated as a normal day for you, and there will not be an additional day off with pay.

What about travel time during the emergency? Do I get paid for that?

In emergency situations, travel time is treated the same as in normal situations. If you are traveling to and from work, you are not compensated for that time. However, if you are on Standby Assignment or Emergency Call Out, the provisions of [Personnel Rule 3, Sections D1 and D2](#) would apply.

Will I get reimbursed for mileage for coming to work during the emergency?

This is the same situation as above. It is treated the same as in normal situations. There is no mileage reimbursement for going to and from work. You are eligible for mileage reimbursement if you drive your personal vehicle during work time to perform official work functions during the emergency.

How do I keep up with information on my status for reporting back to work during an emergency?

If you are unable to contact your supervisor or director, call the Employee Hotline at **453-EMER (453-3637)** for up-to-date information. Do not call the Citizens' Information Center to find out about your work status. These lines need to remain open to address citizens' concerns.