



RESOLUTION TITLE: TO APPROVE REVISIONS TO THE GASTON COUNTY PERSONNEL POLICY MANUAL RELATED TO THE INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY AND THE INTERPRETER PAY POLICY

WHEREAS, Gaston County believes it is important to have a Personnel Policy Manual for employees and supervisors to follow; and,

WHEREAS, it is prudent to review and revise the policy manual periodically to make sure it is understandable, consistent, and up to date with current law, regulations and philosophy; and,

WHEREAS, the current personnel policy manual was approved effective July 1, 2010; and,

WHEREAS, the proposed revisions to the personnel policy are outlined in Exhibit A (attached); and,

WHEREAS, the Gaston County Board of Commissioners must adopt all changes to the Gaston County Personnel Policy Manual.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Gaston County Board of Commissioners adopts revisions to the Gaston County Personnel Policy to be effective January 1, 2024, as outlined in Exhibit A.

DO NOT TYPE BELOW THIS LINE

I, Donna S. Buff, Clerk to the County Commission, do hereby certify that the above is a true and correct copy of action taken by the Board of Commissioners as follows:

NO.	DATE	M1	M2	CBrown	CCloninger	AFraley	BHovis	KJohnson	TKeigher	RWorley	Vote
2023-418	12/12/2023	AF	BH	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	U

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EXHIBIT A



Subject: Inclement Weather Policy

Effective Date: January 1, 2024

Policy Code Number: CMO-1

County Manager: Dr. Kim Eagle

Responsible Department: County Manager's Office

23.CMO-1.1 Policy Objective

As a local government, the essential services of Gaston County ("County") must be provided even during periods of severe weather or emergency conditions. The County is committed to maintaining responsive, on-time, and comprehensive services to the greatest extent possible. However, there are certain severe weather or other emergency conditions that may necessitate closing, delaying the opening of County offices, or extending work periods beyond the employee's regular work schedule:

- Severe weather conditions may be due to weather events such as tornadoes, ice storms, high winds, snowstorms, localized or severe flooding, and thunderstorms.
- Other emergency events may include natural disasters, industrial disasters, traffic/transport disasters (railroad, transfer truck accidents), and/or terrorist activities that result in a risk to persons and/or property.

If a severe weather condition or other emergency event results in extensive property damage or loss of lives, the Chairperson of the Board of County Commissioners may declare the event to be a disaster. Under severe or emergency weather conditions, the County Manager may modify the employees' work schedule as necessary at their discretion.

23.CMO-1.2 Announcements and Notifications

When conditions warrant, the County Manager will determine and announce all decisions to close, delay, or cancel activities of the County.

When the County's schedule is altered, an announcement will be available through news media outlets, the Gaston County Government contact system, via the County's website, employee contact list (Gaston County's mass notification system), and other automated notification systems.

If severe weather or emergency conditions develop during the day, employees will be notified of closings through normal supervisory channels, in addition to the methods referenced in this section.

23.CMO-1.3 Reporting for Work

All employees are expected to make the necessary advance preparations to report each scheduled workday. All employees are responsible for ensuring they can always be reached via valid/updated contact information.

For purposes of severe weather or other emergency events, County Operations are deemed "Essential" or "Non-Essential."



Essential County Operations are expected to report for work on their regular schedule despite any closings, delays, or cancellations, unless otherwise specified, below.

Essential County Operations are designated as, but not limited to:

- i. County Police – essential personnel report as regularly scheduled
- ii. Sheriff’s Office and Jail – essential personnel report as regularly scheduled
- iii. Emergency Management – report as necessary
- iv. Fire Marshal – report as necessary
- v. Gaston Emergency Medical Services – essential personnel report as regularly scheduled
- vi. Emergency Sheltering – report when activated
- vii. DSS (on-call staff) – report when activated
- viii. Landfill Operations – report as assigned
- ix. County Facilities Management – report as assigned
- x. Planning and Inspections – inspectors report as dispatched
- xi. Parks and Recreation – report as assigned
- xii. Animal Care and Enforcement – essential personnel report as regularly scheduled
- xiii. Emergency Communications (911) – essential personnel report as regularly scheduled

A portion of clerical staff of Essential County Operations are considered essential for public safety departments with 24-hour operations; thus, some clerical staff should report as regularly scheduled. Essential county operational departments will be charged with determining the clerical staff that are essential for their operations.

Non-Essential County Operations are County provided services that are not generally needed at the time of a severe weather or other emergency event. Departments not listed under Essential County Operations are considered non-essential.

Non-essential employees are excused from reporting during an official closing, delay, or cancellation unless they are notified by an appropriate supervisor that they must report for work to support the necessary operations of County Government despite the closing, delay, or cancellation of other activities. Such determinations and notifications are made on a situation-specific basis.

Non-essential employees who do not report to work during periods of severe weather when County departments and agencies are operating under a normal work schedule, shall account for the absence by using accrued vacation leave equal to the scheduled workday. In the absence of any formal department or agency guideline for notification of an unplanned leave event, the employee is required to provide notice of an absence from work no later than 30 minutes after reporting time.

Some County departments may allow employees to work a flexible schedule/telework (where applicable) when the County is operating on a delayed-opening schedule. All flexible or telework scheduling should be approved by the employee’s supervisor. If an employee desires to leave work early due to inclement weather conditions, approval shall first be obtained from the supervisor prior to leaving the assigned workstation. The employee shall account for the absence by using accrued annual leave to equal the number of hours not worked in the scheduled workday. Employees who leave work



on approved leave prior to an official early closing time, as well as employees who report for work late or do not report for work at all, will be required to use earned annual leave for the hours or days taken.

All County employees are expected to work their normal work schedule in the event of adverse weather conditions. County offices and departments shall remain open for the full scheduled working day, unless authorization for early closing or other deviation is received from the County Manager's Office. The safety of all County employees is of paramount concern; as a result, the County Manager will always take these events very seriously when deciding the County work schedule. All offices and departments will be given as much advance notice as possible in the event of any authorized shutdowns or early closings.

23.CMO-1.4 Adverse Weather at Night

The County Manager or their designee will decide the County office work schedule by 6:00 a.m. the following morning. This decision will be relayed to all employees through the Gaston County Government contact system. The Communications Director will notify the media if the County will be closed to the public.

In the event the relay system is inoperable, directors and supervisors are expected to contact their staff.

Department Directors shall maintain an emergency contact list for their department personnel in the event that the automated Gaston County Government Contact System does not function or there is a need for more detailed communication.

Employees shall contact their supervisor if they have any questions about reporting to work. Employees who report for work later than the specified work schedule or who do not report for work at all will be required to use earned annual leave time for the hours or days taken.

23.CMO-1.5 Adverse Weather During Work Hours

The County Manager or designee will decide the County office work schedule. Department Directors will be notified of the work schedule through an email notification.

It is the responsibility of each County department to develop and maintain an emergency callback plan. Drafted plans shall be submitted to the Human Resources Director for approval prior to implementation.

Administrative Leave

When County offices have been declared closed, employees (full-time and part-time) scheduled to work on that day will be compensated for scheduled work time with Administrative Leave (up to eight hours). Employees already scheduled for leave of any type on that day will not be compensated with Administrative Leave. Essential employees who work their normal hours during a closing will not be compensated with Administrative Leave.

Offices Open



When County offices have not been declared closed per policies described above, it is the responsibility of employees to make a good faith effort to come to work during times of inclement weather conditions without putting themselves at undue risk of injury. Employees may choose to work flexible schedules and telework where applicable, but it must first be approved by supervisors and granted by the Department Director. Absences under these circumstances require the use of compensatory time, annual leave, or leave without pay if annual leave is not available.

23.CMO-1.6 Compensation

Employees are categorized as exempt or non-exempt in the Gaston County Employee Classification Plan.

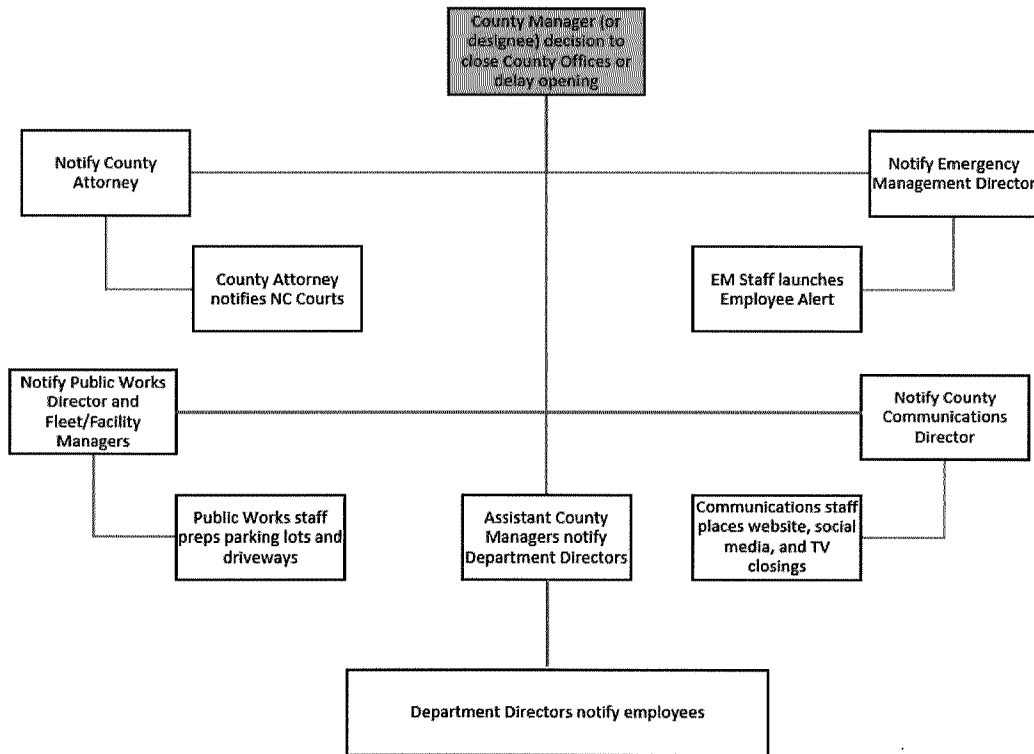
Essential Non-Exempt Employees: An essential non-exempt employee who is required to report to work during a period of severe weather or emergency conditions will receive their base rate of pay/normal compensation for work performed. FLSA overtime rules apply. Overtime is to be compensated as direct pay and requires the approval of the employee's Department Director prior to overtime being worked. Administrative Leave shall not be granted to Non-Exempt Essential employees in the event of reporting to work during a severe weather or emergency condition event.

Essential Exempt Employees: The County Manager may authorize the award of Administrative Leave for an Essential Exempt Employee who responds to a severe weather or other emergency event and works beyond 40 hours for the position. The awarding of Administrative Leave in such case is intended to be compensation for working extended periods beyond the regular schedule, and not for working less than three (3) hours. Such Administrative Leave must be used within six (6) months, or it is forfeited. In the event of a Disaster Declaration that authorizes FEMA reimbursement, the County Manager may authorize overtime compensation for Essential Exempt Employees, provided such overtime is eligible for reimbursement.

Non-Essential Employees will not forfeit pay for regularly scheduled work hours missed due to official closing, delay, or cancellation, nor will they be required to make up the work time or report such time as accrued leave. When Non-Essential Employees report for work to support the necessary operations of County Government during a period of severe weather or emergency conditions, they will receive their base rate of pay. FLSA overtime rules will apply. Overtime will be compensated as direct pay and requires the approval of the employee's Department Director prior to being worked. Administrative Leave may be granted by the County Manager for all Non-Essential Employees that are not able to report to work in the event of closure due to a severe weather or emergency condition event.



23.CMO-1.7 Employee Notification Process Chart



County employees will be notified of County office closures and delayed openings during inclement weather as soon as possible after the decision is made. *Employee Alerts* may also be used in other situations that affect building services or access (e.g., water outages, power failures, etc.). Changes to operating hours or availability of building services will be announced to all employees regardless of location using the following methods:

- Notification through employee’s supervisor or other phone tree established by individual department managers
- Employees can call the County’s main number (704-866-3000) to receive updates on County facility closures
- Text message to all employees registered through Everbridge to receive *Employee Alerts*
- Email to all employees with identical message as text message
- Alerts will be posted at the top of the County’s website home page, www.gastongov.com
- Gaston County Social Media feeds - Facebook (Gaston County, North Carolina) and X (@GastonCountyGov)
- Charlotte Area TV/Media Closing Lists



Notes: Employees registered through Everbridge to receive employee text alerts will be asked to register and periodically update their cell phone number and carrier, should those change.



Subject: Interpreter Pay Policy

Effective Date: January 1, 2024

Policy Code Number: 10.15

County Manager: Dr. Kim Eagle

Responsible Department: Human Resources

10.15. Overview

Gaston County is committed to providing excellent customer service and recognizes that in serving a diverse population, the use of a second language is a benefit in providing quality service. Therefore, the County has developed a program to compensate employees who are proficient in the use of a second language. Employees receiving Interpreter Pay prior to the adoption date of this policy must comply with the testing procedures to continue receiving the pay.

10.15.1

As Gaston County's population has become more diverse, hiring and retaining employees with bilingual skills has become a necessity to provide satisfactory services to customers and clients. The objectives of the program are to establish a language incentive program for Gaston County to better communicate with citizens, strengthen relationships in Hispanic and other communities where English is a second language, provide bilingual services on a consistent basis and aid in the recruitment and retention of bilingual staff. Bilingual employees provide valuable services to Gaston County citizens beyond the normal scope of their job duties, and the County recognizes this additional contribution.

10.15.2 Scope

This policy applies to all full-, part-, and half-time Gaston County employees.

10.15.3 Policy

Departments with a business need for bilingual skills, including American Sign Language (ASL), may identify the necessary language(s) to meet their specific customers' needs and identify positions to function in this role. Full-, part-, and half-time employees who use their bilingual or ASL skills to communicate with customers and/or clients and who meet the language proficiency requirements will receive "Interpreter Pay."

Employees will be required to pass a proficiency test arranged by the department through a third-party evaluator. All eligible employees, including native speakers, are required to be tested. Testing is paid for by the employee's department.

10.15.4 Procedures

1. Directors seeking Interpreter Pay for an employee must submit HR Form 531 to Human Resources describing the reasons they require an employee to receive Interpreter Pay. The following guidelines apply:
 - a. Interpreter Pay is for positions that require a substantial amount of interaction with the public. It is not intended for positions that may use bilingual skills on an occasional basis.



- b. Employees seeking Interpreter Pay will be required to pass a bilingual proficiency test and may be tested periodically thereafter at their supervisor's request.
 - c. Employees receiving Interpreter Pay must agree to interpret for any Gaston County department requiring services.
 2. Human Resources will review the request and notify the department, in writing, of the decision.
 3. Testing will be scheduled by the department. Information regarding testing will be provided to the individual who will undergo testing.
 4. The department will receive testing results and inform employees of their score. If an employee passes, their department will submit a Personnel Action Form to request Interpreter Pay.
 5. If the employee does not pass the test, the department will be notified, and the employee will have 90 days to retake the test. If the employee passes the second test, Human Resources will notify the department and the department will submit a Personnel Action Form to request Interpreter Pay. If the employee fails the second test, the department will be notified, and the employee will not be eligible for Interpreter Pay.

10.15.5 Pay Information

Employees who successfully pass the bilingual or ASL proficiency test are eligible to receive a 5% income authorization added to their regular earnings, designated as "Interpreter Pay." The County reserves the right to stop this incentive without notice, especially if it is determined services are no longer needed, or the employee's scope of work no longer aligns with the use of bilingual or ASL skills.



Gaston County

Gaston County
Board of Commissioners
www.gastongov.com

Human Resources

Board Action

File #: 23-565

Commissioner Johnson - Human Resources - To Approve Revisions to the Gaston County Personnel Policy Manual Related to the Inclement Weather Policy and the Interpreter Pay Policy

STAFF CONTACT

Amia Massey - Human Resources - 704-866-3160

BUDGET IMPACT

N/A

BUDGET ORDINANCE IMPACT

N/A

BACKGROUND

The current Personnel Policy was approved by the Board of Commissioners on July 1, 2010. The manual is reviewed periodically and updated and revised as necessary. All changes to the policy must be approved by the Board of Commissioners. Upon approval of this request, the Personnel Policy will incorporate the revisions to the Inclement Weather Policy and the Interpreter Pay Policy

POLICY IMPACT

See attached for full details of proposed policies.

ATTACHMENTS

Resolution; Exhibit A

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