

## **COMMUNITY COLLEGE POLICY REGARDING COLLEGE CLOSINGS, DELAYED OPENINGS AND EARLY RELEASE\***

### **PREAMBLE**

This policy is written to provide consistent administration of class cancellation, delayed openings, early release of employees and college closings resulting from extreme adverse weather conditions or other emergency situations. The policy applies to classified and unclassified employees, and is intended to balance the interests of providing services to our students and the citizens of Connecticut, with the safety of our faculty, staff, students and facilities. The underlying premise is that colleges will be open in the morning as soon as conditions permit, will remain open for as long as conditions permit, and will close only when emergency conditions related to extreme adverse weather conditions or conditions related to individual facility emergencies dictate that we close.

### **AUTHORITY**

**Governor's Authority.** When the Governor asks that "non-essential" state employees not report to work due to extreme adverse weather or other emergency condition, community college facilities will be closed. When the Governor asks that "non-essential" state employees delay their arrival at work until after the usual opening time for their agency due to extreme adverse weather or other emergency condition, community college facilities will also have delayed openings. When the Governor orders an early release of "non-essential" state employees, community college employees will also be released early. The Office of Emergency Management is charged with communicating directives from the Governor.

"Non-essential" employees are those employees whose presence is not critical to the health, safety and security of the state. "Essential" employees include those in 24/7 agencies, e.g., corrections officers, public safety officers, medical personnel, residential facility personnel, as well as employees in critical service positions, e.g., maintenance and security positions.

In the case of delayed openings and early release, community college employees in critical service positions, and their supervisors, may be expected to report to work as scheduled or to remain after other employees are released in order to secure the facility and remove snow and ice.

**President's Authority.** In the absence of a directive from the Governor, presidents may close the college for a full day or a portion thereof. Partial day closing of the college will be referred to as a delayed opening or an early closing.

**\*NOTE: This Policy may have been modified as a result of collective bargaining. Please be sure to consult any and all appropriate contracts.**

## **OPERATING PRINCIPLES**

**College Closings.** When the president directs that the college will be closed, employees are not expected to report to work, except that the president may require the attendance of employees in critical service positions such as maintenance and security, and their supervisors. Employees who are not expected to report to work need not charge the time off to accrued leave balances. If the president authorizes cancellation of classes and scheduled educational activities for an entire day, the college will be closed.

**Delayed Openings.** Delayed openings are similar to college closings in that, with the exception of employees in critical service positions and their supervisors who may be required to report, staff members are not expected to report to work until the specified opening time and need not charge the time off to accrued leave balances. Employees who do not report to work by the specified opening time who are covered by a collective bargaining agreement that excuses late arrivals under specified conditions are entitled to the benefit of such provision. However, provisions for late arrival are to be measured from the beginning of the employee's shift. Employees who do not report to work at all on a day when the college opening has been delayed will charge the entire shift to an appropriate leave balance.

**Early Release.** If the president directs an early release, the president shall indicate the time when the college will be closed for the day. Employees who are at work and who leave when the college closes need not charge the time remaining in their shift to an accrued leave balance. Employees whose scheduled work shifts have not begun when the president announces early release need not report to work; however, any time between the scheduled commencement of a shift and the time of college closing shall be charged to an accrued leave balance. Employees whose work shifts would not begin before the time of college closing need not charge the time to an accrued leave balance. Employees in critical service positions (e.g., maintenance employees designated for snow and ice removal and security personnel) and their supervisors may not be subject to the early release provisions of this policy.

## **NOTE RE: WEATHER CONDITIONS**

Because weather conditions may vary from one college to another, decisions respecting college closings, delayed openings and early release due to inclement weather should be based upon local weather conditions. Resources available to the college for obtaining information about local or regional weather conditions, including short and long term forecasts, weather watches, warnings and advisories, include the National Weather Service and the State Office of Emergency Management (OEM). Links to these Internet sites are: NWS (<http://iwin.nws.noaa.gov/iwin/graphicsversion/bigmain.html>) and OEM ([www.ct.gov/oem](http://www.ct.gov/oem)).

## **NOTE RE: OTHER EMERGENCY CONDITIONS**

Closure of a college as whole or of an individual college building because of emergency conditions unrelated to weather, including but not limited to extreme hot or cold conditions caused by inoperable heating and air conditioning systems, and interruptions in electricity and water service, is subject to the following considerations:

- The anticipated length of time expected to resolve the problem
- The approximate number of employees impacted by the problem

- If the condition is limited to a portion of the college campus, whether employees can be relocated to an unaffected area of the college.

### **NOTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS**

**Notification to Faculty, Staff, Students and the Public.** College presidents shall provide a communication to all employees annually to inform them about how they will be advised of college closings, delayed openings, and early release. The communication should include details about the various means of communication (e.g., specific radio and television stations where announcements will be broadcast, if any; the college web address; broadcast to employee voicemail mail boxes; and, where applicable, the dedicated telephone line for recorded messages). If a college has opted not to use radio and television media for such announcements, the communication to employees should specifically say this. In addition, employees should be instructed to assume that they should report to work as scheduled, unless the chosen communication channels clearly indicate otherwise.

**Notification of Designation of Critical Service Employees.** Annually, colleges should inform employees who provide critical services that they may be required to report to work in the event of closure, delayed opening of college facilities or early release due to weather or facility-related conditions. The communication channel selected by the president for informing employees about college closings or late openings shall indicate whether critical service employees must report. Employees in critical service positions include those whose jobs involve protecting the safety and security of people, property and facilities, including security personnel, maintenance personnel who have been designated for snow and ice removal and appropriate supervisors.

**Notification to the System Office.** College presidents are asked to inform the System Office via email when the college is closed, when opening is delayed and when early release of employees is authorized. Emails should be directed to Pamela Coleman ([PColeman@commnet.edu](mailto:PColeman@commnet.edu)).

### **RECORDING OF ABSENCES**

In general, employees who are not able to report to work due to adverse weather conditions when the college is open must account for the day or portion thereof through use of appropriate accruals, as outlined more fully on the attached summary of contract provisions impacting inclement weather.

The following direction is provided with respect to recording of absences on timesheets:

- If the Governor authorizes a college/agency closing, delayed opening or early release due to inclement weather, employee absences are recorded on timesheets, and subsequently in the CORE CT HRMS System, using the Time Reporting Code “LWGOV” as directed by the Office of Labor Relations. If, in the absence of a Governor’s directive, a college president authorizes a college closing, delayed opening or early release due to inclement weather, or if a president’s directive covers a larger period of time than the Governor’s directive for the same event, employee absences are recorded on timesheets, and subsequently in the CORE CT HRMS System, using the Time Reporting Code “LWWTR.” For ease of data entry, it is not recommended that two codes be used on a

single day, i.e., one code for a period of absence authorized by the Governor and a second code for an additional period of absence authorized by the president.

- Two other time reporting codes are used for non-weather related absences that are authorized by the Governor or by a college president. The code “LWGOV” is used when the Governor expressly authorizes time off for exceptional circumstances, e.g., to honor the passing of former President Ronald Reagan. The code “LOPD” is used for absences where non-weather related emergencies require the closing of a facility, e.g., power outage. (Note: If a power outage is due to a weather-related emergency, then the code “LWWTR” is used.)
- Please note that the codes “LWWTR,” “LWGOV,” and “LOPD” supersede any different codes identified in collective bargaining agreements.
- In general, if an employee is on a scheduled day off due to sick, personal or vacation leave or leave of absence without salary on a day where the Governor or college president orders agency/college closure, late opening or early release, the employee is required to charge the time to sick, vacation or personal leave, as appropriate, and is not permitted to charge the time to the “LWWTR,” “LWGOV” or “LOPD” code.
- The determination whether an employee is required to charge a late arrival to accrued leave time should be made with reference to the employee’s normal start time (i.e., the beginning of the employee’s shift) and not from the delayed opening time.
- When the college is closed, opening is delayed or early release is ordered, part-time hourly employees are not paid for hours not worked, unless the absence can be covered with accrued leave. Recognizing that certain groups of part-time employees may not have accrued leave, part-time hourly employees should be permitted to make-up missed hours whenever possible, subject to the operating needs of the college.

## **Summary of Contract Provisions Concerning Inclement Weather, Hazardous Driving or other Emergency Conditions**

### **Administrative Clerical Bargaining Unit (NP-3)**

Article 38, Section 13 of the Administrative Clerical contract provides that when an employee is late for work due to inclement weather or hazardous driving conditions, the employee shall not be charged if he/she reports within one hour of the start of the shift; in exceptional situations the employee may be excused for up to 2 ½ hours. In assessing whether or not to excuse lateness in excess of one hour, consideration will be given to the time the employee arrives at work when compared to other employees traveling to work under similar circumstances.

### **Administrative and Residual Bargaining Unit (P-5)**

Article 16, Section 6 of the Administrative and Residual contract provides that when an employee is late for work due to inclement weather or hazardous driving conditions, the employee shall not be charged if he/she reports within one hour of the start of the shift; in exceptional circumstances, the employee may be excused for up to 2 ½ hours. In assessing whether or not to excuse lateness in excess of one hour, consideration will be given to the time the employee arrives at work when compared to other employees traveling to work under similar circumstances.

Article 16, Section 6 of the Administrative and Residual contract also states that in cases in which either the additional 1½ hours are not credited to the employee (i.e., in cases where the employee would have been expected to arrive up to an hour late but did not), or where the lateness exceeds 2½ hours, the employee may opt to either make up the time or charge the excess time to accrued leave.

When a full day off is granted by act of the Governor, an employee on vacation (but not an employee on sick leave) shall not have the day charged as a vacation day. For example, an employee scheduled for vacation on June 11, 2004, which was designated by the Governor as a special holiday in recognition of Ronald Reagan, should have had his/her June 11, 2004 vacation day restored and been charged LWGOV instead. An employee out on sick leave at that time would have had the day charged to sick leave.

### **Maintenance and Service Bargaining Unit (NP-2)**

The Maintenance and Service contract contains special provisions relating to employees designated as having a “snow and ice assignment”. Article 49 provides for the annual designation of bargaining unit employees whose normal duties include snow and ice removal as having such assignment for the current snow season (defined as November 1 through April 30). Employees designated as having a snow and ice assignment are treated as “essential employees” and are required to report to work unless the Governor has closed the State or unless local management directs them not to report. Colleges need to assure that routines are established and that appropriate information is made available to designated employees. Employees should be informed of their designation in writing prior to November 1 of each year.

#### **Engineering, Scientific and Technical Bargaining Unit (P-4)**

The Engineering, Scientific and Technical bargaining unit contract does not have language on inclement weather conditions or hazardous driving. It does address the subject of temperature variations which, if outside prescribed guidelines, may result in the dismissal or transfer of affected employees. Employees who are dismissed in such circumstances have no loss of pay or benefits.

#### **Protective Services Bargaining Unit (NP-5)**

The Protective Services contract does not have language on this issue.

#### **Congress and AFSCME Administrator Bargaining Units (Congress/AFSCME)**

Article X of the 2007-2010 contracts with the Congress and AFSCME unions adopts the Board Policy on College Closings, Delayed Openings and Early Release with certain modifications: (1) Where administrators, counselors or librarians (“ACLs”) are not at work when the decision to close the college is made, they are expected to report unless the scheduled beginning of their work day coincides with or is later than the time that the college will close. If such employees do not report to work at all, they are required to use accrued leave to cover only the period between the scheduled beginning of their work day and the time that the college closes. In the case of a delayed opening, ACLs who do not come to work, or who come to work after the time of the delayed opening, are required to use accrued leave to cover only that portion of their scheduled work day following the delayed opening when they are not at work.

#### **Federation Bargaining Unit (AFT)**

Section 18.8.1 of the AFT contract provides that when the college is closed due to weather or other circumstances, all Faculty Members (both teaching and non-teaching) need not report to work and shall suffer no loss of pay or charge to any other leave.

Revised 11-15-11