



POLICY CAO-01: Closure or Reduced Service Level Policy

Office of the CAO

Approval Date: September 25, 2001
Approval Authority: Council Resolution No. 6
Effective Date: December, 2000
Revision Date/s: March 18, 2015; December 20, 2023

PURPOSE:

Weather conditions or other situations can, at times, create difficult travel conditions or subsequent interference with the normal business operations/services of the County. The following outlines the County Policy with regard to County operations/services during inclement weather conditions or other situations.

Critical Services Definition:

For the purpose of this Policy, “critical services”* are deemed to include:

- Roads, Fleet, Water and Wastewater (specific personnel as required)
- Norview Lodge (specific personnel as required)
- Fire and Paramedic Services (specific personnel as required)

* In addition, other employees may be deemed as “critical services” as determined by a General Manager, in consultation with the CAO, in emergency situations.

IMPLEMENTATION PROCEDURE:

County-Wide

Inclement weather, for the purpose of this Policy, shall be defined as weather conditions such as snowstorm, ice storm, wind storm (e.g. tornado), flooding or other unforeseen acts of nature which are so severe that vehicular or pedestrian travel is extremely hazardous or impossible and/or major road closures have occurred or are imminent within the County.

“Other” situations shall be defined as any occasion deemed to be of such a serious nature to cause interference with the normal business operations/services of the County such as power outage.

In this Policy, closure of County facilities and/or cancellation of County services due to inclement weather or other situations are deemed to mean that the business activities/services at those County facilities shall cease or be reduced and staff, except for those providing critical services*, shall be permitted to vacate their workstation.

County facilities and services at all locations shall be open and available during regular working hours unless inclement weather or other situations are so severe that, in the opinion of the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO), or designate, , determine the facilities

should be closed and services suspended or reduced. Direction to close will be given by the CAO, or designate. The decision to close the County facilities/services shall be based upon weather and road conditions or other situations, as they exist within the County.

The CAO will continue to make the determination respecting the closure of Norfolk County offices.

In severe or extended situations, the County's Emergency Control Group (ECG) would be invoked to deal with these circumstances.

Localized Event

In situations where events are localized to a smaller area of the County such as: isolated power outages, the relevant General Manager in consultation with the Chief Emergency Warden and CAO will refer to the Emergency Procedures for Norfolk County Facilities to determine if the facility should be closed or if staff can be reassigned to work in other facilities that may be open and unaffected by the event. The Mayor is to be kept apprised of the situation. **In some cases, where the duration of a power outage cannot be determined, the announcement of closure or re-assignment, including working remotely in accordance with policy [HR 30 Working from Anywhere](#), will occur in as timely a fashion as possible.**

In a situation where staff from an individual department leave the office/workplace during the workday due to power outage, weather, etc., resulting in less than the full scope of services being delivered, the department must be considered closed and contact ServiceNorfolk, in accordance with [EBS-56 Corporate Notice of Service Disruption Policy](#).

Staff whose office is located in Haldimand County should listen to the local radio station or check the Haldimand County website to determine if they are closed.

Impending Weather Condition E-mail Notification:

Although not every type of incident can be predicted, below is an example e-mail to use when staff are inquiring about the situation:

A severe weather warning has been issued for ____ (date)_____.
Please be advised that the CAO will be in consultation with the **Operations** Division and Hydro One early in the morning to assess the situation. Any closures or suspension of services, if deemed necessary, would be in accordance with the Closure or Reduced Service Level Policy (CAO-01).

If there are any suspensions or closures, they will be announced starting at **6:30 a.m.** Staff are directed to check their email for additional communication from Norfolk County. **Employees shall be advised to reference the local media and corporate social media channels for current information throughout the day.**

Public announcements will be communicated **by the Corporate Customer Service and Communications department** using the Norfolk County **Corporate Facebook**

and Twitter pages, as well as a media release which will be issued to all local media using the Norfolk County Media distribution group (DG).

For Significant Unplanned Event Refer To:

- Norfolk County Emergency Response Plan (NCERP) By-law #2012-77
- Emergency Procedures for Norfolk County facilities

**CLOSURE OF THE FACILITIES AND SUSPENSION OF THE SERVICES PRIOR TO
THE START OF THE NORMAL WORK DAY:**

1. "Norfolk County" shall determine if any County facilities should be closed or services suspended due to inclement weather or other situations except for those deemed CRITICAL SERVICES* as outlined in "Critical Services" section of the policy.
2. In accordance with [HR 30 – Working from Anywhere policy](#), **staff who have the ability to work from home are encouraged to work from home that day and will be paid for all hours that are worked. Staff who were scheduled to be in the office, need to notify their supervisor that they will be working from home.**
3. When "Norfolk County" makes the determination to close the facilities **prior** to the beginning of a normal workday, those employees who are not deemed as a "critical service" and do not have the ability to work from home, shall be eligible for wages for the regular scheduled time that they would normally have worked if the closure had not taken place.
4. Decisions determining closure of facilities and suspension of services should be made no later than 6:00 a.m. - allowing time to contact radio stations thereby having announcements in place by **6:30 a.m. Public announcements will be communicated by the Corporate Customer Service and Communications department using the Norfolk County Corporate Facebook and Twitter pages, as well as a media release which will be issued to all local media using the Norfolk County Media distribution group (DG).**
5. The CAO or designate shall inform staff via email of the closure or suspension of services and direct them to refer to policy CAO-01 for additional information and consult with their supervisor as required.
6. If Haldimand County closes their offices due to inclement weather, Health and Social Services offices in Haldimand County will also close and staff who have the ability, will be directed to work from home.
7. If an Employee calls in (prior to the facilities being officially closed and services being suspended) to advise that they will not be coming into work, such employee is not eligible for payment of wages for the time that they would normally work. However, said Employee may elect to use accumulated overtime, vacation, or flex time to compensate for regular scheduled hours normally worked.
8. An Employee who is absent on a pre-approved vacation, flex day, or absent due to illness, shall have such time deducted from their appropriate bank, and will not be entitled to reimbursement as a result of a closure.
9. Staff are directed to listen to the local radio station, **follow Norfolk County Facebook and Twitter accounts**, and check their Norfolk County email for closure notifications.
10. All automated telephone attendants shall be updated by the position indicated in the departmental contingency plan(s).

11. Each employee shall be responsible for changing personal voice mail messages utilized within Norfolk County noting the closure.
12. A notice of service disruption shall be posted in accordance with [EBS-56 Corporate Notice of Service Disruption Policy](#) in a visible place on the premises (on doors, at service counters, on bulletin boards, etc.), on Norfolk County's website, and other methods as is reasonable under the circumstances.

CLOSURE OF FACILITIES AND SUSPENSION OF SERVICES/ DURING THE WORKDAY

When "Norfolk County" makes the determination to close the facilities and suspend services during the workday, Employees may elect to leave earlier than the official closing time, at the discretion of the Department Director or designate concerned; however, the Employee will only be compensated for hours worked that day.

Those Employees (whose job function permits) who call in to advise that they will be working at home in accordance with policy [HR-30 Working from Anywhere](#), shall be paid for actual hours worked at home up to, but not beyond, their regular scheduled hours of work with the approval of his/her Supervisor.

If an Employee does not report for work, but:

1. Calls in to advise that they will be in as soon as conditions allow, e.g. driveway/roads plowed, hydro resumed, and, in the interim, the building is closed; or
2. Had a scheduled medical appointment, and planned to attend work before or after that appointment, but was advised of the closing of the facilities and suspension of services, and returned home directly from the medical appointment; or
3. Is on his/her way to work and is advised of the closing and returns home and calls in and finds the building has been closed;

Such employee **will be paid** for the regular scheduled time that they would normally have worked if the closure had not taken place.

When Norfolk County makes the determination that facilities are to be closed and services suspended (after 8:30 a.m.);

1. The CAO or designate shall notify General Managers, who will ensure all departmental employees including those in satellite offices, are notified within a timely manner.
2. **Public announcements will be communicated by the Corporate Customer Service and Communications department using the Norfolk County Corporate Facebook and Twitter pages, as well as a media release which will be issued to all local media using the Norfolk County Media distribution group (DG).**
3. The CAO or designate shall notify all General Managers with written notification of the official closing time as soon as possible. Critical Service(s)* as outlined in "Critical Services" section of the policy shall remain working.
4. If Haldimand County closes their offices due to inclement weather, Health and Social Services offices in Haldimand will also close.
5. All automated telephone attendants shall be updated by the position indicated in the departmental contingency plan(s).

6. Each employee shall be responsible for changing personal voice mail messages utilized within Norfolk County noting the closure.
7. Employees who have scheduled meetings with individuals (other than County staff) will personally contact those individual(s).
8. Every department shall be responsible for having a contingency plan in place to deal with issues related to building closure affecting their departments, e.g. phone tree, satellite offices.
9. A notice of service disruption shall be posted in accordance with [EBS-56 Corporate Notice of Service Disruption Policy](#). Notice will be given by posting the information in a visible place on the premises (on doors, at service counters, on bulletin boards, etc.), by posting on Norfolk County's website, and by such other method as is reasonable under the circumstances.

SAMPLE MEDIA RELEASE – for closure during the day

Norfolk County Administration Facilities Closing @ 2:30 – March 14, 2023

SIMCOE, ON - Due to the severe weather bulletin issued for Wednesday, March 14, 2023, County Administration facilities are being closed at 2:30 p.m. on March 14, 2023, in accordance with the "Closure or Reduced Service Level" Policy (CAO-01).

County services remaining OPEN include:

- Roads, Fleet, Water and Wastewater
- Norview Lodge
- Fire and Emergency Medical Services

Contact:

If you have any questions, comments or concerns about this message, please email communications@norfolkcounty.ca