

Emergency Operations

-Approved
UBOH 01/28/2009
GB 01/29/2009
-Effective 01/29/2009

Audience

This policy applies to all Galveston County Health District employees.

Policy

It is the Health District's policy that all employees are expected to fulfill their emergency response activities to maintain employment with the District. The District has a statutory responsibility to respond to declared emergencies.

Chief Executive Officer

In the event of an emergency declared by either the County Judge or Local Health Authority, the Chief Executive Officer or designee has the authority to:

- expand and/or alter operations,
- reduce services,
- let staff go for evacuation and set term of evacuation,
- approve emergency expenditure of funds,
- grant emergency leave as needed due to extenuating circumstances (*Reference: Employee Leave policy*),
- pay overtime to non-exempt and exempt employees outside of the normal process,
- waive or change fees, and
- take other actions deemed necessary to protect the health and safety of the citizens of Galveston County during an emergency.

Non-essential and Essential Personnel

Depending on the type of emergency, employees will be designated as essential or non-essential. It is the responsibility of the employee to contact their supervisor to determine if he/she is essential or non-essential.

Non-essential personnel are defined as employees whose presence is not essential in implementing all or portions of the *All Hazards Emergency Management Plan*, but who cannot leave their positions until released by their supervisor. Non-essential personnel are responsible for:

- calling the Health District's emergency number at (409) 938-2489 for return to duty information daily;
- remaining in contact with their supervisor regarding assignments and return to duty information; and
- staying abreast of the emergency situation by monitoring radio/television/internet for instructions.

Essential personnel are defined as employees whose presence is essential in implementing all or portions of the *All Hazards Emergency Management Plan*. Any exempt or non-exempt employee may be deemed essential in order to provide for the safety and well being of the general public or for the restoration of vital services before, during, and after an emergency condition. This *typically* includes, but is not limited to, executive managers and staff, BT staff and EMS personnel as well as other individuals who are required, in the course and scope of their employment, to provide services for the benefit of the general public during emergency situations. The Chief Executive Officer or designee will designation which essential personnel are required to remain in the county on the job or at a designation location during an emergency.

All employees are required to annually complete an Employee Hurricane Location form (*Reference: All Hazards Emergency Management Plan*) and submit a copy to their Supervisor. Before or during an emergency condition, it is the essential employee's responsibility to pre-plan the safeguarding and/or relocation of his/her family before the employee is required to report for duty.

Non-essential and Essential Personnel Compensation

(*Reference: All Hazards Emergency Management Plan*)

If a public health emergency/disaster situation occurs or a Disaster Declaration is issued for any jurisdiction comprising the Health District, employees, both exempt and non-exempt may be compensated in the following manner:

Non-essential personnel released from duty by the Chief Executive Officer may receive compensation (disaster pay) at their regular rate of pay until the Chief Executive Officer or designee declares the date and/or time when all employees are expected to return to work or the expiration of three (3) working days, whichever event occurs sooner. In other words, the Chief Executive Officer or designee must declare the date and/or time when all employees are expected to return to work within 3-days of the date the emergency is declared.

Essential personnel performing functions to save lives and/or protect health and safety under the *All Hazards Emergency Management Plan* may receive compensation for hours worked during the situation. Hours worked up to 40 hours per week for the duration that Health District's offices are closed may be paid at a straight time rate (i.e. non-essential personnel that have evacuated may get paid emergency leave, essential personnel that did not evacuate and worked during the incident may get paid emergency leave and straight time pay for up to 40 hours worked during the incident). All hours in excess of 40 hours will be paid at the overtime rate of time and one half.

This policy may be modified in emergency situations as deemed necessary by the Chief Executive Officer or designee. Each emergency approval made by the Chief Executive Officer or designee will be brought to the next board meeting for review and ratification.

Employee Responsibilities

Each employee is responsible for:

- understanding and following this policy and seeking clarification from his/her supervisor if unsure about any portion of the policy or responsibilities during a declared emergency;

- calling the Health District’s emergency number at (409) 938-2489 for return to duty information daily;
- contacting his/her supervisor to determine if he/she is considered non-essential or essential personnel;
- reporting to work and possibly performing duties outside of current job description to assist in emergency;
- remaining in contact with his/her supervisor regarding assignments and return to duty information; and
- staying abreast of the emergency situation by monitoring radio/television/internet for instructions.

Supervisor Responsibilities

Each supervisor is responsible for:

- understanding and following this policy and seeking clarification from his/her supervisor if unsure about any portion of the policy or responsibilities during a declared emergency;
- communicating non-essential and essential status to employees;
- communicating expectations to employees regarding job duties during an emergency; and
- orienting new and existing staff to emergency operations upon hire and annually thereafter.

Human Resource Responsibilities

The Human Resource Director is responsible for:

- including the following statement in all job descriptions “be available to accept new assignments to meet disaster–related Health District responsibilities”; and
- assuring orientation for new staff addresses the responsibility of employees during a disaster.

Law

It is the intent of this policy to be in compliance with statutes as cited in the District’s All Hazards Emergency Management Plan.

Violation

Violation of this policy may result in appropriate corrective disciplinary action, up to and including suspension, probation, or dismissal.