

Emergency Personnel Policy

Final (4/2014)

STATEMENT OF POLICY

It is the mission of Cochise County to provide for the safety of its staff and the citizens of Cochise County, as well as to ensure continuity of essential services in those situations declared a State of Emergency by the Board of Supervisors or during an incident deemed to be of significant impact to the County as determined by the County Administrator or his/her designee. Due to the nature of Cochise County being a public service organization, it is expected that employees be available to respond to the needs of citizens during such situations. These emergencies may include, but are not limited to: natural disasters, public health emergencies, critical public infrastructure failure, Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) activation or any large-scale event that stresses the resources of County government.

SCOPE/COVERAGE

This policy applies to all classified and unclassified County employees and appointed Department Directors.

GUIDELINES

- A. For the purpose of this policy, all County employees will be considered to be first responders who, in the early stages of an incident, are responsible for the protection and preservation of life, property, evidence and the environment, including emergency response providers as defined in Section Two of the Homeland Security Act (2002), as well as emergency management, public health, clinical care, public works and other skilled support personnel that provide immediate support services during prevention, response and recovery operations.
- B. In situations declared a State of Emergency or incidents of significant impact to the County, it may be necessary to reprioritize the provision of County services. This may involve reassignment of staff to emergency assignments, including duties outside of their normal job classification.
- C. Employee skills and capabilities will be taken into account when being provided with emergency assignments.
- D. All efforts will be made to schedule employees to work at or near their normal work facility.
- E. Emergency or disaster situations may require changes to employee work hours or locations, outside of what is typical, in order to meet the needs of the situation. Work schedules may be adjusted including, but not limited to: longer hours per day; different starting and ending times; evening, weekend or holiday assignments; and the suspension of vacation or other

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time-off requests. The County will adhere to the applicable requirements of the Federal Fair Labor Standards Act.

- F. All necessary precautions will be taken to ensure the safety of employees. Employees will not be asked to perform activities that knowingly jeopardize their health or safety.
- G. Cochise County recognizes that there may be legitimate reasons that would prevent an employee from responding when called upon. Employees are required to get approval from their Department Head if they are not able to report to emergency assignments.
- H. Refusal to report to emergency assignments may be cause for disciplinary action, not to exclude termination.
- I. Upon hire, employees are expected to provide accurate emergency contact information so that they may be called upon in the event of an emergency. It is the responsibility of the employee to keep their emergency contact information current, and to notify their supervisor if there is a change in their emergency contact information.

PROCEDURES

- A. Only the Board of Supervisors may declare a County-wide State of Emergency.
- B. The County Administrator or designee may determine for the purposes of this policy that an incident of significant impact to the County exists. The Board of Supervisors will be informed of this determination as soon as practical.
- C. The Deputy County Administrator, Human Resources Director, and Emergency Services Coordinator, or their designee(s), will act as an emergency coordination team to coordinate the assignment of employees to emergency duties as determined to be necessary. Department heads will be consulted and kept informed of events as deemed appropriate by the emergency coordination team.
- D. Employees work hours will be tracked and documented per procedures implemented for the incident, as emergency circumstances may alter normal payroll procedures.
- E. Upon arrival at their assigned workplace, employees will be informed of, and expected to adhere to, incident requirements related to the implementation of safety procedures or use of personal protection equipment.

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- F. Employees will receive appropriate training to allow them to safely and efficiently complete their emergency assignments.

EMERGENCY COMPENSATION

- A. Employees will receive regular and overtime compensation for hours worked during emergencies according to the County's established compensation policy.
- B. Compensatory time for extra hours worked during emergencies will follow the guidelines set in the County's Adverse Weather Policy (Res. #02-01)
- C. Management Leave (per Personnel Policy pg. 22) may apply to exempt personnel working extraordinary hours during an emergency as determined by the County Administrator.
- D. All response related overtime will be coded and tracked as applicable to the emergency. This emergency overtime may become reimbursable as a result of a Presidential Disaster Declaration for the emergency.