

ALASKA COURT SYSTEM
OFFICE OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE DIRECTOR
ADMINISTRATIVE BULLETIN NO. 60
(Revised December 24, 2024)

TO: ALL HOLDERS OF ADMINISTRATIVE BULLETIN SETS

All Justices	Senior Staff
All Judges	Central Services
Area Court Administrators	Judicial Services
Clerk of the Appellate Courts	APD Warrants
Rural Court Administrators	
All Magistrate Judges	
All Clerks of Court	
Law Libraries at Anchorage, Fairbanks, & Juneau	

SUBJECT: Emergency Closure Protocol

I. Emergency Closure Plan

- A. All trial courts, appellate courts, and the administrative office must have a written emergency closure plan in place. The plan must follow the guidelines listed in sections II, III and IV below. It will be the responsibility of the following individuals to develop the plan:
- Area Court Administrators in their resident locations
 - Clerks of Court (outside the ACAs resident locations)
 - Clerk of the Appellate Court
 - Administrative Senior Staff, as directed by the Administrative Director.
- B. Plans must be submitted to the following offices for approval, and after approval, will be submitted to the Helpdesk for posting on the court's intranet page:
- Area Court Administrators for the trial courts
 - Clerk of the Appellate Courts for the appellate courts
 - Deputy Director for Administration
- C. After approval, the plan must be provided to all employees. Employees should be instructed to ensure they have access to the plan at home. New employees should receive a copy of the plan from their supervisor during orientation.

II. Authority to Close or Partially Close Courts and Offices

The decision to close or partially close the courts and administrative offices will be made by the Administrative Director or his/her designee.

Employees must be advised that closure of state Executive Branch offices by the governor does not constitute authorization to close court offices.

III. Leave Policy

- A. In the event of an authorized closure or partial closure of a court or office, all personnel released from work in that office will be given administrative leave to cover the time period of the closure.

If the court closure extends beyond three (3) days, the Administrative Director in consultation with the Chief Justice will determine the terms of the extended closure. These terms may include continuing the affected employees on administrative leave, placing the affected employees in layoff status, or reassigning the affected employees to other duties or locations.

- B. Overtime eligible employees who are required to physically come into the workplace to perform the emergency or essential court functions will have personal leave added to their leave banks, and overtime exempt employees who are required to physically come into the workplace to perform emergency or essential court functions will receive compensatory time equal to the number of hours they worked in the office during the closure.
- C. In the event of a partial closure of a court, affected employees may be reassigned to other departments or areas. If employees are assigned to duties generally performed by employees in higher job classifications, they will be compensated for such work at the appropriate level in the higher classification.
- D. If an employee is on previously approved personal leave, is in another location for work at the time of the emergency closure or partial closure, or has the ability to perform their job duties remotely, that employee is not entitled to administrative leave or other compensation.
- E. If closure or partial closure of the court has not been authorized, employees not present in the work place will be required to take personal leave.

IV. Guidelines

- A. Each court and department within the administrative office (as designated by the Administrative Director) will designate one employee (judicial officer, area court administrator, clerk of court, or administration supervisor) to be the "emergency closure" employee, and another employee to act in the absence of the designated emergency closure employee. The emergency closure employee is referred to as the "designated employee" in this Bulletin

- B. If the designated employee has reason to believe there is an emergency, or if the governor or mayor closes or partially closes state or city offices, the designated employee must contact the person listed below to determine if the court or office will be closed.
 - 1. Designated employees for the trial courts must contact the Area Court Administrator or, in his/her absence, the presiding judge. The Area Court Administrator must then contact the Administrative Director for authorization to close or partially close a court.
 - 2. Designated employees for the appellate courts must contact the Clerk of the Appellate Court or, in his/her absence, the chief deputy clerk. The Clerk must then contact the Administrative Director for authorization to close or partially close a court or office.
 - 3. Designated employees for the administrative office must contact the Deputy Director or, in his/her absence, the Fiscal Officer. The Deputy Director must then contact the Administrative Director for authorization to close or partially close a court.

- C. If an emergency arises before 8:00 a.m., the designated employee should contact the Administrative Director for authorization to close the court or office between 6:00 and 7:00 a.m., if possible, to allow ample time to notify employees and jurors of the closure.

- D. Each court and administrative department will set up a systematic way to notify employees of an emergency closure or partial closure (e.g. emergency alert system NIXLE, text alert via cell phone, email, phone tree, etc). Each court will also set up procedures for notifying jurors of an emergency closure.

- E. If a court or office is closed or partially closed, the Administrative Director or the designated employee for the affected court, will contact affected employees by using the notification system in place for that court location. The Administrative Director will also contact a designated employee in the Information Technology department to instruct him or her to post a notice of the closure on the court system's website.
- F. The designated employee should post signs on the entry doors of the court to notify employees and the public of the emergency closure, if it is safe and reasonable to do so.
- G. Each court and administrative division will designate emergency personnel who may be required to work in the event of a partial closure of a court or office. At a minimum, court or department supervisors will be deemed emergency personnel. Other personnel may be designated emergency personnel if needed. The determination whether the emergency personnel will be required to work during any emergency closure will depend on the nature of the particular emergency that caused the closure.
- H. If the emergency may affect the court's electronic equipment (e.g. volcanic ash fall, flood, or power outages), the designated employee must make arrangements to have the equipment (including computers) turned off or otherwise protected (e.g. covering the equipment, moving it off the floor, etc.)
- I. Within three days after the closed court has reopened, the designated employee must contact Fiscal Operations and Human Resources to convey all information that could affect accounting issues (e.g. dates and duration of the closure, authorized amounts of administrative leave or FLSA overtime, which employees were affected by the closure, etc.)
- J. If the designated or back-up employee terminates employment, the court or administrative division will designate a new person and immediately notify the Area Court Administrator, Clerk of the Appellate Courts, or Deputy Director. The written plan must be amended and distributed to employees.

Dated: December 24, 2024

/s/
Stacey Marz
Administrative Director

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