

## HOURS OF DUTY AND LEAVE

- 1. REASON FOR ISSUE:** To issue Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) procedures regarding hours of duty and leave.
- 2. SUMMARY OF CONTENTS/MAJOR CHANGES:** The page in this transmittal replaces the corresponding page number in VA Handbook 5011 dated April 15, 2002. This change revises the definition of emergency situation to accommodate individual impact situations, where recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Part III. This change will be incorporated into the electronic version of the VA Handbook 5011 that is maintained in the [Office of Human Resources Management and Labor Relations Web site](#).
- 3. RESPONSIBLE OFFICE:** The Worklife and Benefits Service (058), Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Human Resources and Labor Relations.
- 4. RELATED DIRECTIVE:** VA Directive 5011, Hours of Duty and Leave.
- 5. RESCISSIONS:** Refer to the Transmittal Sheet for VA Handbook 5001, General Introduction and Administration.

**CERTIFIED BY:**

/s/  
Robert N. McFarland  
Assistant Secretary for  
Information and Technology

**BY DIRECTION OF THE SECRETARY  
OF VETERANS AFFAIRS:**

/s/  
R. Allen Pittman  
Assistant Secretary for  
Human Resources and Administration

ELECTRONIC DISTRIBUTION ONLY

**PART III  
CHAPTER 2**

as considered reasonable may be granted. This excused absence will not be in addition to that authorized under Section 6326. However, it may be appropriate to approve excused absence under this administrative policy when it would not be a right under Section 6326, such as when a member of the Armed Forces is killed in the line of duty when not in a combat zone.

**u. Weather and Emergency Situations**

(1) **Definition.** An emergency situation may be caused by heavy snow, severe icing, flooding, earthquakes, hurricanes, massive power failures, fuel shortages, major fires, strikes, public transportation crises, riots, mass demonstrations, etc. The emergency must be general rather than personal in scope and impact. It should be severe enough to prevent employees in significant numbers from reporting for work, or may necessitate the closing of Federal facilities in whole or in part. Usually, an emergency of this type will be the subject of a public declaration of emergency by appropriate Governmental authority. [Personal impact situations such as an employee's absence as recommended in accordance with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines may also meet the definition of emergency situation for these purposes.]

(2) **Employees Providing "Critical" Services.** There are certain critical VA operations which cannot be curtailed even though it may be generally necessary to excuse employees for all or part of a day.

(a) **VA Medical Centers, Domiciliaries, and Outpatient Clinics.** All employees of these facilities are deemed to be providing critical services. Incumbents of these positions are required to be at work regardless of emergency situations or any general dismissal authorization.

(b) **Other VA Facilities.** Heads of other types of VA facilities should identify positions that are also deemed to be providing a critical service. Except for office closings, incumbents of these critical positions are also required to be at work regardless of emergency situations or any general dismissal authorization. Employees so designated should be made aware, preferably in writing, of the special requirements placed on them for reporting to, or remaining at, their work-sites in emergency situations.

(c) **Identification.** It may be necessary to provide employees of critical positions with some identification that would enable them to commute at times when only emergency travel is allowed on the highways.

(3) **Absences Due to Emergency Situations.** Where it is determined that an employee in a non-critical position made every reasonable effort to get to work and was unable to do so, excused absence without charge to leave may be authorized. These excused absences do not generally apply to employees who provide critical services as discussed in paragraph (2) [ ], because of the need to assure continuity of essential VA operations. However, in a rare instance, where certain employees who provide critical services make every reasonable effort to get to work and are unable to do so, the facility Director may approve excused absence without charge to leave as provided in paragraph (8)(a) [ ].

**(4) Early Dismissals**

(a) When early dismissal is authorized, excused absence without charge to leave may be granted to employees who are in duty status. This includes employees deemed to be providing critical services. For this purpose, employees are considered to be in duty status if they are: