

HAZARDOUS WEATHER CLOSINGS QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

1. Q. What is the best way to obtain up-to-date Eielson base closure or delayed reporting information?

A. Base status information is posted online at the following public, off-base website (<http://www.eielson.af.mil/>). Additionally, updates will be posted to on the installation Facebook page (www.facebook.com/EielsonAirForceBase) and will be recorded on the snow line 377-SNOW (6779).

Active duty Airmen can sign up themselves and their dependents to receive email, voice and text message alert notifications via the Eielson AtHoc Emergency Notification System. This application exists on government computers connected to the base network.

2. Q. What area radio/television stations does Eielson notify to broadcast base closure or delayed reporting information?

A. Formal press releases are not made to local TV/radio stations; Icemen are encouraged to check the base website through which updates are made much more rapidly.

3. Q. What is AtHoc?

A. AtHoc is an Emergency Notification System that provides automated telephone messaging, text messages, and computer pop-up messages (if on the Eielson network) to provide Icemen time-sensitive information about emergency conditions. All active duty assigned to Eielson are required to enter basic contact information, however, we strongly encourage active duty members to enter text messaging and contact information for dependents to ensure these critical messages get out as soon as possible. This is not mandatory and requires the active duty member to edit their profiles accordingly.

4. Q. What is mission-essential designation?

A. Mission essential personnel are individuals required to maintain minimum base operating functions (e.g., force protection, fire protection, medical response, emergency room, command post, hospital patient care, dining facility, etc).

5. Q. Who decides who is mission-essential?

A. Organizational commanders must approve such designations, but will rely on their supervisory structure for recommendations. If in doubt as to your status, discuss it with your supervisor.

6. Q. Do mission-essential civilian personnel receive additional compensation when they are required to work after the bulk of the workforce has been dismissed?

A. No. There are no alternative forms of compensation available for those mission-essential personnel who are required to work during a base closure due to inclement weather. Additional forms of compensation apply when employees work more than eight hours a day (or more than their scheduled number of hours) or more than 40 hours a week. In this case, overtime pay or compensable time off may be appropriate. These are the normal provisions for compensating employees for overtime. Current pay regulations covering this are based on federal law and cannot be modified.

7. Q. How are Eielson employees notified that they are mission-essential?

A. It is the responsibility of the first level supervisor to inform an employee, in writing, that they are designated as mission-essential when the employee is first assigned to the position. Employees will be reminded annually, in writing, that they encumber a mission-essential position by the organizational commander.

8. Q. A civilian employee is unable to report for duty because of weather or road conditions and the base is open for normal business. What kind of leave should be charged to the employee?

A. Air Force Instruction 36-815 *Absence and Leave*, paragraph 9.6.2, provides direction to commanders on how to charge absences under hazardous weather conditions. In case of employees who do not report for duty during hazardous weather, annual leave is charged for the full duty day, unless the supervisor concerned determines, after personal review of the facts in each case, that the employee made every reasonable effort to get to work, but was unable to do so because of the weather conditions. Determining factors for consideration in the decision include: Distance between the employee's residence and place of work, and mode of transportation.

9. Q. The base is initially open, but subsequently closes and employees at work, except for mission-essential personnel, are released early on administrative leave; civilian personnel not at work are charged leave. Why are not all civilian employees put on administrative leave?

A. Air Force Instruction 36-815, paragraph 9.6, provides direction for group dismissals of employees under adverse weather conditions without charge to leave. Under this instruction, only employees who are in a duty status at the time early dismissal takes effect are excused without charge to leave. Employees who are absent that day continue to be charged leave. Employees in a duty status who depart on leave prior to the early dismissal, but after official word is received, are charged only from the time of departure until the time set for dismissal. However, certain Federal Wage System (FWS) employees serving under a temporary appointment may not be granted administrative leave. When the base is closed for the entire shift, all employees, except those determined to be mission essential, are excused including those who are on previously approved leave, provided they are in a pay status either the day preceding or the day following the day of excused absence. Mission essential employees are only excused without charge to leave when they are in an approved leave status for their entire shift and their supervisor does not require them to report for duty.

10. Q. Who makes the decision to grant administrative leave in the event of hazardous weather?

A. The 354th Fighter Wing Commander (354 FW/CC) decides whether to dismiss employees in the event of hazardous weather. Before making this decision, the 354 FW/CC consults the 354 MSG/CC, who obtains reports from Ground Safety, the Security Forces Squadron, and the Command Post, who collects reports from base, city, county, or state agencies relative to particular situations which might affect the health and safety of employees.

11. Q. What is the status of contract employees when federal employees are released due to hazardous weather?

A. The decision as to whether contract employees will continue to work or be released is made by each contractor and the respective contracting office at the time administrative leave is authorized for federal employees by the 354 FW/CC. Contract employees need to review their contracts concerning the procedures to follow for early departure, late arrival, and base closings. Each contract may vary as to when an employee will be granted early departure or late arrival during hazardous weather. The decision to pay employees for administrative leave will also depend upon the agreement with the employer. To avoid confusion, contract employees should review the procedure on hazardous weather with their supervisor as soon as possible.

12. Q. What is the procedure if the hazardous weather occurs outside of normal duty hours (0600- 1800) or normal duty days (Monday-Friday)?

A. Upon determination by the 354 FW/CC that the base should be closed or delayed arrival or early departure is appropriate for employees not designated mission essential, the 354 FW/CP will initiate telephone notification to group and tenant commanders, provide messaging to 354 FW/PA to update the base website and Facebook page, and initiate AtHoc notification. Organizational commanders will in turn provide the appropriate information to the employees who are working. Questions regarding weather delays, excused absence, etc., must be directed to the employee's supervisor. The 354 FW/CP cannot provide direction to employees and will not provide information beyond what has been made publicly available on the Eielson AFB website (www.eielson.af.mil).