

Office Closure

Reviewed Date		Number	OP0104
Revised Date	August 30, 2023	Approved Date	June 24, 1992

Introduction

The Board of Health recognizes that weather can adversely affect operations. Given our large geographic service delivery area, each office is assessed on an individual basis regarding possible closure.

In addition to inclement weather, special circumstances may necessitate the closure of one or more of the health unit offices during normal office hours. Depending upon the specific circumstances, an office may be either closed only to the public or closed to both staff and the public.

Every reasonable effort will be made to ensure all offices remain open to staff and the public and our service delivery continues. As it is not possible that all situations may be covered in this policy, staff are to be guided by what is reasonable in the circumstances. If staff are out of harm's way, have made alternate safe work arrangements, and/or are able to safely continue working then staff should continue working despite any office closures.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to inform Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit Board of Health members, employees, volunteers and students of organizational expectations and processes for staff during office closures.

Given the numerous situations that may arise involving office closures, a number of aspects of this policy may or may not apply to all employees of SMDHU. Accordingly, Union members are subject to their Collective Agreement.

Legislative Authority

N/A

Policy Definitions and Interpretation

Designates for the Manager of Facilities and Infrastructure during office hours are:

1. Vice President (VP) of Human Resources and Infrastructure
2. Manager of Human Resources
3. Manager of IT

Policy

The Board of Health empowers the Medical Officer of Health (MOH) or designate, to close the offices of the health unit in response to local circumstances.

Procedures

Facility Issue:

A. Branch Office Closure Procedure for a facilities issue occurring before normal office hours:

1. Facilities on call representative may be notified of facilities issues outside normal office hours via the on-call process. If deemed necessary, they will make a recommendation to the MOH or alternate that an office be closed.
2. If closure is required, the MOH or designate will attempt to contact all Executive Committee members between 7:00 and 7:30 a.m. in order that they may initiate a fan out notification to their Managers/Supervisors so they may discuss possible alternate work arrangements with their staff. When offices are closed during normal working hours (8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.) consideration must be given to cancelling evening work (clinics/classes/community events/other programs with evening hours) if appropriate.
3. In the unlikely event that the office is closed and it is deemed impossible by the Direct Supervisor to make suitable alternate work arrangements for staff, such affected staff may be paid up to the number of hours scheduled for the day/evening to a maximum of seven (7) minus any hours worked, such that the paid hours for the day does not exceed seven (7). Paid leave of absence will be the reason code for the time off. A staff member on a prior-approved leave, vacation or who has elected to take vacation for the day or who was ill on a day when the office is closed or closes early will code their time accordingly. In these circumstances, payment consideration for the office closure will not be granted.
4. The facilities on call representative will contact the Branch Office Lead and branch office Program Assistant/Receptionist and email the rest of management and all users advising of the closure.
5. The facilities on call representative will electronically lock the office doors.
6. The facilities on call representative will notify the Health Equity, Health Promotion and Communications Team of the closure and request they notify the public via voicemail greeting, social media, website posting, blog on intranet and other means as necessary.

B. Branch Office Closure Procedure for facility issues during office hours:

1. In the event of a specific branch office issue (e.g., power outage) the Program Assistant/Receptionist for the branch office will notify the Manager of Facilities and Infrastructure or designate of the issue and inform the Branch Office Lead.
2. The Manager of Facilities and Infrastructure or designate in consultation with the MOH or designate will determine whether an office closure is required.
3. If closure is required, the Medical Officer of Health or designate will contact all Executive Committee members so that they may initiate a fan out notification to their Managers/Supervisors so they may discuss possible alternate work arrangements with their staff. When offices are closed during normal working hours (8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.) consideration must be given to cancelling evening work (clinics/classes/community events/other programs with evening hours) if appropriate.
4. The Manager Facilities and Infrastructure or designate will contact the Branch Office Lead and the branch office Program Assistant/Receptionist and email management and all users advising of the closure.
5. If an office is closed staff will contact their Direct Supervisor to discuss alternate work arrangements.

6. In the unlikely event that the office is closed and it is deemed impossible by the Direct Supervisor to make suitable alternate work arrangements for staff, such affected staff may be paid up to the number of hours scheduled for the day/evening to a maximum of seven (7) minus any hours worked, such that the paid hours for the day does not exceed seven (7). Paid leave of absence will be the reason code for the time off. A staff member on a prior-approved leave, vacation or who has elected to take vacation for the day or who was ill on a day when the office is closed or closes early will code their time accordingly. In these circumstances, payment consideration for the office closure will not be granted.
7. Staff out of harm's way and in a safe work location and/or working from home are to continue working notwithstanding any office closures.
8. The Program Assistant/Receptionist in the affected office(s) will follow the standardized office closure procedure including the posting of the closure on the office doors and ensuring those responsible for scheduled clinics are notified.
9. The Manager Facilities and Infrastructure or designate will notify the Health Equity, Health Promotion and Communications Team of the closure and request they notify the public via voicemail greeting, social media, website posting, blog on intranet and other means as necessary.
10. The Manager Facilities and Infrastructure or designate will notify facilities to electronically lock the office doors.
11. If the temporary situation causing the office closure is rectified (e.g.: power restored) during the hours of 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. staff will then be called back to work by their Direct Supervisor in order to finish their day.

Adverse Weather:

A. *Branch Office Closure Procedure for inclement weather occurring before normal office hours:*

1. Between 6:30 a.m. and 7:00 a.m. the on-call facilities representative will monitor all local adverse weather conditions in the event of anticipated extreme weather causing unsafe conditions using a standard set of criteria. If deemed necessary, they will make a recommendation to the MOH or alternate that an office be closed.
2. If closure is required, the MOH or designate will attempt to contact all Executive Committee members between 7:00 and 7:30 a.m. in order that they may initiate a fan out notification to their Managers/Supervisors so they may discuss possible alternate work arrangements with their staff. When offices are closed during normal working hours (8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.) consideration must be given to cancelling evening work (clinics/classes/community events/other programs with evening hours) if appropriate.
3. The facilities on call representative will contact the Branch Office Lead and branch office Program Assistant/Receptionist and email the rest of management and all users advising of the closure.
4. The facilities on call representative will electronically lock the office doors.
5. The facilities on call representative will notify the Health Equity, Health Promotion and Communications Team of the closure and request they notify the public via voicemail greeting, social media, website posting, blog on intranet and other means as necessary.
6. In the event of anticipated adverse weather, staff are encouraged to listen to local radio stations for SMDHU office closure announcements and road closures. In the event that a staff member determines they cannot safely make it to their assigned office they will contact their Direct Supervisor to advise of such. Alternate options for attending work

which may be approved by the supervisor include:

- a. working from an alternate office
 - b. delaying travel,
 - c. work from home
7. If alternate work arrangements are not approved by the Direct Supervisor and the staff member still determines they cannot safely make it to their assigned office, the employee will seek their supervisor's approval to use one of or a combination of the following to cover their absence:
- a. vacation time
 - b. accumulated compensation time
 - c. flex leave
 - d. flexible work hours
 - e. float day
 - f. leave without pay.
8. In the unlikely event that the office is closed and it is deemed impossible by the Direct Supervisor to make suitable alternate work arrangements for staff, such affected staff may be paid up to the number of hours scheduled for the day/evening to a maximum of seven (7) minus any hours worked, such that the paid hours for the day does not exceed seven (7). Paid leave of absence will be the reason code for the time off. A staff member on a prior-approved leave, vacation or who has elected to take vacation for the day or who was ill on a day when the office is closed or closes early will code their time accordingly. In these circumstances, payment consideration for the office closure will not be granted.

B. Branch Office Closure Procedure for inclement weather during office hours:

1. The Branch Office Lead, onsite management and/or branch office Program Assistant/Receptionist will call the Manager Facilities and Infrastructure or designate to report local adverse weather conditions in the event of extreme weather causing unsafe conditions.
2. The Manager of Facilities and Infrastructure or designate will assess the situation using a standard set of criteria. If deemed necessary, they will make a recommendation to the MOH or alternate that an office be closed.
3. If closure is warranted, the MOH or designate will contact all Executive Committee members so that they may initiate a fan out notification to their Managers/Supervisors so they may discuss possible alternate work arrangements with their staff. When offices are closed during normal working hours (8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.) consideration must be given to cancelling evening work (clinics/classes/community events/other programs with evening hours) if appropriate.
4. The Manager Facilities and Infrastructure or designate will contact the Branch Office Lead and branch office Program Assistant/Receptionist directly and email management and all users advising of the closure.
5. The office Program Assistant/Receptionist will post a sign on the office door, so the public are aware that the office is now closed.
6. The Manager Facilities and Infrastructure or designate will notify the Health Equity, Health Promotion and Communications Team of the closure and request they notify the

public via voicemail greeting, social media, website posting, blog on intranet and other means as necessary.

7. The Manager Facilities and Infrastructure or designate will notify facilities to electronically lock the office doors.
8. In the event that the office is closed, if alternate work arrangements cannot be made with their immediate supervisor a staff member with regular hours of work, as outlined in their employment letter, may be paid the number of hours scheduled for the day/evening to a maximum of seven (7). The period of the office closure will be considered Paid Leave of Absence. A staff member on a prior-approved leave, vacation or who has elected to take vacation for the day or who was ill on a day when the office is closed or closes early will be required to code their time accordingly. In these circumstances, payment consideration for the office closure will not be granted.
9. Notwithstanding B.8., staff working in another office that has not closed are to continue working despite the fact that their assigned office has closed. Staff out of harm's way and in a safe work location and/or working from home are to continue working notwithstanding any office closures.
10. Staff working in an office that closes for the day that is not their assigned office shall be deemed to be part of that closed office and paid for the remainder of their scheduled work day if alternate work arrangements cannot be made.
11. Non-Union casual staff members who work as needed and who do not have a regular schedule of hours outlined in their employment letter, will be paid a minimum of either 4 hours or their scheduled shift, whichever is the lessor, when there is no advance warning of closure (closure announced same day as shift), and alternate work arrangements cannot be made. Where advance warning is provided, no payment will be made for the missed shift.
12. If conditions are such that it is not deemed necessary to close an office, yet a staff member makes the decision that they cannot continue to remain at work, the staff member will contact their Direct Supervisor and discuss alternate work arrangements. If alternate work arrangements are not approved by the Direct Supervisor employees will use one of or a combination of the following to cover their absence:
 - a. vacation time
 - b. accumulated compensation time
 - c. flex leave
 - d. flexible work hours
 - e. float day
 - f. leave without pay.
13. In the case of a branch office Program Assistant, 80 Bradford Program Assistant/Receptionist or 15 Sperling Receptionist, if the office is remaining open yet they make the decision that they cannot continue to remain at work due to the inclement weather conditions, the staff member will contact their Direct Supervisor and exercise the options outlined in B 12 once a replacement, if one is available, has reported to work.
14. Staff who have made alternate arrangements with their Direct Supervisor prior to the office closure are to continue working in those alternate arrangements if they are out of harm's way and in a safe work environment notwithstanding any office closures.
15. When inclement weather conditions render travel to localized non-office worksites to be unsafe as identified by staff or management, such travel will be curtailed, and alternate work arrangements will be determined between the affected staff and their Direct

Supervisor.

Inability to Cover Branch Office Reception:

1. In the event that the branch office Program Assistant/Receptionist is absent and alternate coverage cannot be arranged, in a timely manner the Supervisor Administrative Support or designate will inform staff present in the office and the Branch Office Lead and arrange temporary coverage of the reception function if possible. Notwithstanding, non-clerical branch office staff are expected to do what they can to assist SMDHU in keeping the branch office open to the public.
2. The Supervisor Administrative Support or designate will notify the Manager of Facilities and Infrastructure or designate.
3. The Manager of Facilities and Infrastructure or designate in consultation with the MOH or designate will determine whether an office closure to the public is required. If closure is required, the Medical Officer of Health or designate will contact all Executive Committee members in order that they may initiate a fan out notification to their Managers/Supervisors so they may discuss possible alternate work arrangements with their staff. The Manager Facilities and Infrastructure or designate will contact the Branch Office Lead and email management and all users advising of the closure.
4. The Branch Office Lead or a designate (staff working in the affected office) will follow the standardized office closure procedure including the posting of the closure on the office doors and ensuring those responsible for scheduled clinics are notified.
5. The Manager Facilities and Infrastructure or designate will notify the Health Equity, Health Promotion and Communications Team of the closure and request they notify the public via voicemail greeting, social media, website posting, blog on intranet and other means as necessary.
6. The Manager Facilities and Infrastructure or designate will notify facilities to electronically lock the office doors.

Special Notes

1. In the event that the Board of Health authorizes an office closure to recognize a special event, staff members will be advised through the MOH or designate.
2. Depending upon the unique circumstances, SMDHU offices may remain open to either just staff or staff and the public, notwithstanding the decision by other agencies co-located within that office setting to close.

Related Policies

Related Forms

Final Approval Signature: _____

Review/Revision History:

Revised: September 25, 1996

Revised: May 28, 2008

September 2010 Policy re-numbered, previous number B2.030

Revised: January 20, 2012 – Adverse Weather protocol endorsed by MOH

Revised: February 12, 2014

Revised: July 12, 2017

Revised September 29, 2022, VP

August 30, 2023, Clarification on the cancelation of shifts