



Did you know?

Federal buildings typically remain open during severe weather and employee liberal leave is instituted. In most situations, this means *Federal workers can telework or take leave. There are no "snow days" for Federal employees.*

In the rare event that the building closes, the child care center will also close. However, because federal buildings typically remain open during severe weather, your decision to close your center should not come solely from the status of the Federal building. Child care centers need their own policies on weather related closures.

Good communication is essential. If you make the decision to close, you need a reliable method of communicating the news to the Board, Agency, Parents, and the GSA Regional Coordinator. Make sure your method of communication is included in your policy.

Do you have a plan for inclement weather?

Chances are you already had to initiate your snow plan this winter season. And more bad weather is sure to be on the way.

When making the decision to close or remain open during severe weather, consider:

- Road conditions and the safety of staff and families.
- Emergency personnel's ability to reach you on the roads.
- Your ability to meet NAEYC and licensing staff: child ratios.
- Food service
- Building support personnel, such as security and maintenance.
- Existing protocol or contractual obligations in the board contract which you must meet.

If your center stays open:

- have a reliable method of estimating the number of children that will be present to ensure staff can meet licensing and NAEYC ratios.
- coordinate with the property manager to ensure building and security personnel are available to assist with the safety of the children and staff in the event of an emergency.
- ensure food service is available.

Closure decisions should be coordinated with the Board (or Agency if applicable). Communicate to your stakeholders that the decision is based on (1) inability to meet staff: child ratios and (2) the goal to not put children or staff's safety at risk.

Sample language for OEP

Storms & Snow

Provider (if applicable add, in consultation with the board of directors) will make the decision whether to close during severe weather.

Director will determine prior to opening, any delayed hours or closures. Families will be notified by (how?)

(refer to center's parent policy)

If the child care center must close during hours of operation because of severe weather, the director will notify parents by _____.

If weather conditions prevent a parent or legal guardian from reaching the facility to recover a child, the center staff will care for the child (maintaining proper child: staff ratios) until such time as the parent, legal guardian, or emergency contact person can safely claim the child. The disaster supplies will be used as needed.

When a child is not picked up due to emergency situations including, but not limited to inclement weather or natural disasters, staff will remain at the center with the child as long as the staff has been notified of the delay. Any arrangements to transport the child to the police or Child Protective Services care site will be coordinated with local licensing.

Consider in your policy how late fees apply in severe weather.

Are you covered?

Plan for the "worst case" scenario.

What would you do if a pipe bursts and flooded the center? Or what if you close for an extended time? What is your plan for salaries? Will you expect full tuition payments?

What does your insurance cover? Do you need business interruption insurance?

Remember to include your snow policy in the Occupancy Emergency Plan (OEP) and parent and staff policy handbooks.

