



Department of Employee Relations

December 6, 2019

Tom Barrett
Mayor

Maria Monteagudo
Director

Renee Joos
Employee Benefits Director

Nicole M. Fleck
Labor Negotiator

To the Honorable
Finance and Personnel Committee
Common Council
City of Milwaukee

Dear Committee Members;

In February of 2019 the Common Council directed the development of policies and procedures to govern the closing of City facilities due to inclement weather. This resolution stemmed from the need to streamline and clarify policies and procedures related to the suspension of non-essential City services given the events of January of 2019 and the Inclement Weather Policy in effect at that time.

The Department of Employee Relations has reviewed relevant policies and regulations in order to determine provisions to recommend for a new policy. We have worked with the Mayor's Office, the Health Commissioner, the Public Works Commissioner, and the President of the Common Council in drafting a policy that addresses concerns related to the decision to suspend non-essential operations due to severe weather events and that decisions' impact on employees.

CC File # 191065 recommends adding a new provision in section 350-210 of the Milwaukee Code of Ordinances relative to the Mayor's authority to declare a severe weather emergency and the significance of that declaration on Department Heads and their authority to make operations and service delivery determinations. Such determinations relate to among other things hours of operations, work activities, work locations and assignments.

This new provision authorizes the Department of Employee Relations to develop and implement policies and procedures relative to severe weather emergencies and how decisions regarding maintenance or suspension on non-essential operations are to be handled by city departments.

If the recommended changes are approved by the Common Council, a new Severe Weather Emergency Policy will be implemented by DER. A draft of the Policy is attached for your information. The key provisions of the new Policy are:

Declaration of a Severe Weather Emergency- the policy requires the Mayor to consult with the Commissioners of Health and Public Works before declaring a severe weather emergency for purposes of city non-essential operations.

Communication protocols to follow after a severe weather emergency declaration by the Mayor.

Options available to a Department Head after the declaration including impact on work hours, availability of alternative assignments or work locations, or a determination that all operations are cancelled for the day.

Employee options upon a declaration of a severe weather emergency including making the determination of whether they want to and are allowed to report to work, work from a different location, or change their hours for the day.



A pay provision that allows employees to be compensated for the day when the Department Head determines that operations for the day are cancelled and no other alternative is available.

DER looks forward to discussion the recommended changes to the Code and the applicable provisions of the policy at the upcoming meeting of the Finance and Personnel Committee.

Sincerely, *Maria Monteagudo*

Maria Monteagudo
Director

