



INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM TEM 1.87

New York State Department of Civil Service
Albany, NY 12239

ADM-22 (5/06)

TO: Civil Service Commission
FROM: Terry Jordan
SUBJECT: Request to Suspend the Attendance Rules for Albany, Broome, Chenango, Cortland, Delaware, Fulton, Herkimer, Oneida, Orange, Otsego, Schoharie, Sullivan, Tioga, Tompkins and Ulster Counties for June 28, 29, and 30, 2006

Date: December 4, 2006

The Requests

The Civil Service Commission has received requests from the following agencies to suspend the Attendance Rules in 15 counties for several days due to flooding in the southern tier at the end of June: the Department of Correctional Services, the Department of Transportation, the Department of Labor, the Office of Mental Health, the Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities, the Office of the State Comptroller, the Health Department, the State Insurance Fund, the Office of Temporary Disability Assistance, the Department of Taxation and Finance, The State University of New York at Binghamton, and the State University College at Delhi.

Background

On June 27 and June 28, 2006 a record amount of rain fell across New York State of which at least 4.05 inches fell on the Greater Binghamton area. On June 28, 2006 Governor George E. Pataki declared a State Disaster Emergency for nine counties that suffered damages in the flooding that ravaged the southern tier. The affected counties included Broome, Chenango, Cortland, Delaware, Herkimer, Montgomery, Otsego, Schoharie and Tioga Counties. Later in the day the Governor added four additional counties to the State Disaster Emergency Declaration: Oneida, Orange, Sullivan and Ulster counties.

On Wednesday June 28, 2006, due to the severe rain and extensive flooding a 117-mile stretch of the Thruway was closed between Exits 34A (Syracuse) and Exit 25A, eastbound and westbound.

The flooding that began Tuesday and grew Wednesday set records for numbers and impact across the region. The Susquehanna at Vestal exceeded its 18-foot flood stage by more than 15 feet at mid-afternoon Wednesday, breaking the previous record by 2 1/2 feet.

At least four deaths were attributed to the floods.

The Governor directed that the State Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan be implemented and authorized the State Emergency Management Office (SEMO) to coordinate State agencies assisting local governments. He also activated the National Guard to support evacuation and emergency missions. In addition the NYS Department of Transportation provided more than 350 personnel and 132 pieces of equipment to the response throughout the area.

Requested early departure for non essential employees in agencies in the City of Binghamton was approved by GOER on Wednesday June 28, 2006. Weather conditions continued to deteriorate as the day progressed.

Basis of Recommendation

Three of the counties for which agencies have requested suspension, Albany, Fulton and Tompkins counties, were not among the 13 counties for which Governor Pataki issued a State Emergency Disaster. In each of these counties absenteeism was not significant.

Although Montgomery County was declared a Disaster Emergency area, no requests for suspension of the Attendance Rules were received from agencies in Montgomery County.

Despite the severe weather absenteeism was not significant in the following counties: Cortland, Herkimer, Oneida, Orange, Schoharie, Sullivan, Tioga, and Ulster.

In Broome County absenteeism was significant on June 28th and June 29th. In Chenango County absenteeism was significant on June 28th. In Delaware County absenteeism was significant on June 28th. In Otsego County absenteeism was significant on June 28th.

Recommendation

We recommend that the Commission suspend the Attendance Rules for the following counties for the following days:

- Broome June 28 and June 29
- Chenango June 28
- Delaware June 28
- Otsego June 28

We also recommend that the Commission suspend the Attendance Rules for employees of the SUNY College at Delhi, which is located in Delaware County, for June 29 and June 30, 2006. A bridge which crosses Steele Brook was part of the main entrance to the campus. Early in the morning on June 28, a blockage caused by trees wedged against that bridge caused the water to jump its banks. The main entrance to the campus was flooded and access was impossible, even on foot. Staff who tried to come to work were turned away by local emergency services personnel. College officials announced via local media, the college web site and the college weather hotline that the college was not open on June 28, 29 and 30. Employees were instructed to remain home and to charge accruals.

We also recommend that the Commission suspend the Attendance Rules for employees in the Norwich Department of Labor Office which is located in Chenango County for June 29, 2006, in addition to June 28, because that worksite was completely inaccessible due to the flooding.

GOER concurs with these recommendations.