



Greater Boston Federal Executive Board

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October 1, 2012

MEMORANDUM FOR GREATER BOSTON FEDERAL AGENCY HEADS

FROM: Robert Zarnetske, Chair

SUBJECT: Greater Boston Federal Executive Board Emergency Decision & Notification Procedures for Winter Weather

As the winter season approaches, I'd like to outline the Greater Boston Federal Executive Board's (GBFEB) emergency decision & notification procedures relating to winter storms. Please review carefully to avoid confusion..

During extreme winter events, the GBFEB will continue to provide up-to-date, accurate and consistent information from subject-matter experts to agency decision-makers via our emergency communications systems. Effective immediately, we will also, when deemed necessary, issue a "non-binding advisory" relative to the status of agency operations for non-emergency employees. We will do so in collaboration with Federal, state and local officials at the earliest possible time before or during a winter storm.

FEB involvement in this area dates back to the late-1960's when, based on proposed legislation, then-Civil Service Commission Chair John Macy asked all FEBs to develop policy guidance, and plans for application, relative to adverse weather, in order to promote local consistency. While the information and technology has evolved, our objective today remains the same. With this in mind, and based on your feedback, our procedures have been modified to better meet our member needs. As always, agency decision-makers have the option of utilizing the FEB as part of their decision-making but it is not mandatory.

Following the extremely challenging winter season in 2011, we learned that, overwhelmingly, agencies across the Northeast rely heavily on their respective FEB for non-binding input for decision-making. Agencies then refer to their internal procedures to make a decision on the state of operations and individuals follow their employing agency's local instructions.

It is important to note the FEB takes this role seriously and that non-binding advisories will be issued only following careful analysis and consideration. (See chart below for sample.) Our thresholds will be high and based on collaboration with state and local governments.

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As outlined in our All Hazards Plan, a committee, consisting of the GBFEB leadership, and regional principals from the US Coast Guard, GSA, Federal Protective Service and FEMA, will review forecasts, and consult with state and local officials. We will distribute real-time data, and, when necessary advisories, via our emergency communications system . We will also provide detail about what the non-binding advisory means, and does not mean.

I cannot reinforce enough our goal is to provide accurate, up-to-date and consistent information in order to make informed decisions. We do not close Federal buildings, agencies or provide administrative leave. Agencies are always responsible for making final determinations on the status of their operations.

As always, your feedback is welcome. Please contact the FEB office at 617-565-6769 should you have any questions or comments.

Att.

Attachment to: Greater Boston Federal Executive Board
Emergency Decision and Notification re: Winter Weather Memo 2013

SAMPLE – Non Binding Advisories

Advisory	Meaning	Possible Trigger (Each storm will be analyzed on a case-by-case basis)
<p>“Based on long and short term forecasts, and in collaboration with state and local officials, the GBFEB is issuing a non-binding advisory to Federal agencies in Massachusetts <u>to consider closure for tomorrow;</u>”</p> <p>This is an advisory only. Federal employees should consult with their agency leadership for instructions.</p>	<p>Federal buildings are open however it is recommended that agencies close to the public. When possible, non-emergency employees should not commute to their primary workplace.</p> <p>Federal agencies are requested to implement their winter storm plans;</p> <p>Emergency employees report as usual;</p>	<p>Declaration of a State of Emergency by the Governor and closure of state and local offices;</p> <p>MBTA service disruption’</p> <p>Reasoning: The safety of employees is our # 1 priority. Additionally, minimizing commuting volume often better supports state and local storm management;</p>
<p>“Based on long and short term forecasts, and in collaboration with state and local officials, the GBFEB is issuing a non-binding advisory to Federal agencies in Massachusetts to consider a delayed arrival of <u>no more than 2 hours for tomorrow</u>”</p> <p>This is an advisory only. Federal employees should consult with their agency leadership for instructions.</p>	<p>Federal buildings are open on time and Federal agencies are open for business. However, when possible, managers are asked to provide flexibility of up to 2-hours from an employee’s ordinary start time to accommodate for employees who may have difficulty commuting due to transportation or other delays.</p> <p>Federal agencies are requested to implement their winter storm plans;</p> <p>Emergency employees report as usual;</p>	<p>Significant MBTA delays; Road closures and/ or plowing delays;</p>
<p>“Based on long and short term forecasts, and in collaboration with state and local officials, the GBFEB is issuing a non-binding advisory to Federal agencies in Massachusetts to <u>consider a staggered early release or up to 2 hours.</u>”</p> <p>This is an advisory only. Federal employees should consult with their agency leadership for instructions.</p>	<p>Agencies are requested to provide flexibility in permitting employees to depart up to 2 hours earlier than their normal departure time.</p> <p>Federal agencies are requested to implement their winter storm plans;</p> <p>Emergency employees report as usual;</p>	<p>Increased volume on roads; Fast moving storm predicted to impact the evening commute; MBTA delays or disruptions;</p> <p>Minimizing volume at the traditional commuting hour is prudent.</p>