

Smithsonian Operating Decision Process Inclement Weather

Operating Decisions in the Federal Government

The Smithsonian follows the Office of Personnel Management's guidelines concerning early dismissals and closures of offices in the event of inclement weather.

OPM makes the determination and announcement as to whether the federal government is open or closed; operating on unscheduled leave or a delayed arrival; or is dismissing employees early.

The OPM operating status is available at www.opm.gov/status. The OPM status applies to all **non-emergency personnel**.

Employees who service the museums and the National Zoo while the government is closed are typically designated as **emergency personnel**. Employees who are considered to be emergency personnel will have a signed agreement in place with their supervisor.

All employees should check OPM's website for updates about the operating status of the federal government. Employees are also encouraged to monitor local news media for updates about the status of the federal government.

The Smithsonian also provides status updates at www.alerts.si.edu.

Smithsonian Museum Operations

Museum and National Zoo operations are separate from the federal government's operating status. **If the federal government is closed, it does not mean that the museums and the National Zoo will be closed.**

When there is the possibility of weather-related emergencies, incidents or issues that could potentially impact the public operating hours of the Smithsonian, the following operating decision process occurs:

Step One: Office of Facilities Engineering and Operations Coordination

- The OFEO director (or deputy director) confers with the unit OFEO unit directors, chiefly the Office of Protection Services, the Office of Facilities Management and Reliability, Smithsonian Gardens.
- This group will determine if the museums and the National Zoo can be safely opened to the public or if only a limited number of museums can be opened. The group also will determine if the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) and the Secretary's Command Center (SCC) should be activated.
- The OFEO director (or deputy director) will then confer with Smithsonian Enterprises' director of retail to determine what services can be provided to museum visitors (food, beverages, stores, theaters, etc.)

In addition to the above steps, the National Zoo director has the delegated authority to determine opening and closing of the National Zoo on weekends, holidays, or any other

time that the Zoo is staffed on a non-business day as it may be necessary under severe weather conditions to close or modify the hours of operation affecting staff and visitors.

Employees duty stationed at Edgewater, Md. or Front Royal, Va. are not considered to be located in the Washington, D.C. area. Non-emergency employees should follow instructions issued by management at these facilities.

For locations outside the Washington, D.C. Metropolitan area, unit directors determine whether their facilities are open or closed, or will operate under an open with adjusted home departure policy (delayed arrival), or an adjusted home departure/unscheduled leave policy. Employees in these locations should follow the established procedures to learn of the operating status of the facility.

When a decision is made to close and/or modify operation schedules at the National Zoo, Edgewater, Md., Front Royal, Va., and/or locations outside the Washington D.C. area, it is critical that the Directors (or Director Designees) inform the Office of the Under Secretary for Finance and Administration and the Office of Communications and External Affairs (OCEA) about decisions to close and/or modify operating schedules.

Step Two: Office of the Under Secretary for Finance and Administration Coordination

- The Under Secretary and the OFEO director (or deputy director) will discuss OFEO's recommendation for opening the museums and the National Zoo. They also will discuss whether the EOC and the SCC should be activated.
- If necessary, the Under Secretary may consult with museum directors and/or the cabinet in formulating his final decision
- The Under Secretary will communicate the decision on the operating status for the museums and the National Zoo to the director of the OCEA.

Step Three: Teleconference and Email Communication to Smithsonian Leadership

- If the Under Secretary thinks it is necessary, OFEO will arrange a teleconference to discuss the Under Secretary's decision about the operating status for the museums and the National Zoo.

Step Four: Public and Staff Notifications

- The following notifications about operating decisions are made as follows:
 - OCEA updates the Smithsonian's public website
 - OCEA posts information about the operating status of the museums to social media and shares the information with unit social media managers
 - OCEA alerts local media if there is a change in the operating status of the museums or the National Zoo
 - OFEO updates the OFEO Information Center and the SI Alerts website, the Alerts Hotline and SI Mobile Alerts
 - OFEO updates the Desk Top Alerts, and/or Informa-cast (only if the incident may be life-threatening), OFEO Help Communications Center and/or OPS

If in the event of a change in operating status of either the government or the museums and the National Zoo, an SI-wide email is **not** issued—employees should follow OPM and the local media for that information. The information is also posted on www.si.edu. An SI-wide

email and SI Mobile Alert will always be issued in the event of an emergency or life-threatening situation.