

Key Considerations in Your Inclement Weather Policy

We all remember the joy we experienced as children when we heard on the news, “It’s going to snow tomorrow.” Even now it’s exciting to look forward to the rare experience of snowfall in our community, **but as employers we must also consider the potential implications for business disruption.** Two snow events in the last month, one very severe, have prompted many employers to either review their existing inclement weather policy, or to implement one for the very first time.

The following are what we consider to be the essential components of a comprehensive inclement weather policy.

Official Company Status - STREAMLINE CXO recommends that key management personnel be designated in advance to make opening and closing decisions on an incident by incident basis. Depending on conditions, your business may be designated as “Officially Open” or “Officially Closed.” If the business is “Officially Open” employees should understand that they are expected to report for work if they can do so safely. They should also understand that the fact that the business is “Officially Open” does not mean they should drive to work if they feel that it is unsafe to do so.

Communication - Clear and complete two-way communication. Employees should be provided with the name and phone number of the appropriate member of management whom they should call for information on possible business closings, and to report on their own personal status as it relates to reporting for duty. Employees should be instructed to communicate only with someone in management in the event they are unable to report for work.

What about pay? - Employees should also understand that time missed when the business is “Officially Open” must be compensated by the use of vacation/PTO days, or taken as unpaid time. Many employers choose to force the use of vacation/PTO time in these situations. Some employers have opted to include in their policy a provision that the first “x” hours of time missed by employees when the business is “Officially Closed” will be covered at the expense of the company. These policies normally cover anywhere from one to three days per severe weather incident.

Sample Policy – Following is a sample Inclement Weather policy for your consideration:

Inclement weather, “Acts of God” or other emergency situations occasionally create conditions that adversely impact the ability of the Company to conduct normal business operations. When these situations occur, it is important that employees report to work as scheduled when possible, but safety should not be jeopardized. The Company urges employees to use good judgment when making decisions about commuting in hazardous conditions. If an employee anticipates being late then the supervisor should be advised of the expected delay.

The Company will assume that employees will arrive when conditions permit. If conditions preclude travel to work, employees should inform their supervisor as soon as possible. If the supervisor cannot be reached directly, then Employees can leave a phone message

Management will decide on a case-by-case basis when the business is “Officially Closed” due to inclement weather. The decision will be communicated to employees by recorded message on the Company’s Weather Hot Line at XXX-XXX-XXXX. When the business is “Officially Closed” employees will receive their regular pay for a period of up to 12 work hours per incident. Work hours missed during an Official Closing beyond this 12 hour period may be taken as unpaid time off or the employee may use available PTO hours to cover this unpaid time.

Conclusion – STREAMLINE CXO is happy to discuss the design and implementation of your inclement weather policy. We can’t control the weather, but having a formal plan in place just might make the next weather event a little less chaotic.

Enjoy the snow!

NOTE: STREAMLINE CXO is responsible for providing the essential support our clients need to secure their compliance with IRS and DOL laws and regulations.

Our goal is to deliver a preventive approach to employment situations and ensure these approaches are managed appropriately. If you have questions about our services, or **KEY CONSIDERATION IN YOUR INCLEMENT WEATHER PLAN**, please contact us.