

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES
COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES



SUBJECT: BUILDING CLOSURE POLICY

POLICY NO. 990

PURPOSE:: This policy statement provides guidelines to Department of Health Services (DHS) managers on situations necessitating the closure of DHS buildings and the procedures to be followed.

INTRODUCTION:: Building closures result in an interruption of service to the public and disruption to the work force. Due to the critical patient care mission of DHS hospitals, clinics, and comprehensive health centers, every attempt must be made to keep these facilities open, unless the emergency absolutely necessitates closure. However, it may be necessary for County/DHS buildings to be closed following either site-specific emergencies, localized emergencies or widespread disasters. Examples of the types of situations that could warrant building closure include significant fires, hazardous materials releases, earthquake damage, terrorist or other major security threats, etc.

BUILDING CLOSURES:: Department of Health Services (DHS) buildings should only be closed if there is a clear and present danger to the occupants, or if the building systems have been disrupted to the point that no work can be performed. It is also recognized that there may be instances in which severe disruption of roads, bridges or infrastructure may prevent employees from reaching their work locations. In such situations, lack of a sufficient work force may also necessitate the closure of DHS buildings.

The following DHS policies and procedures have been established to:

- A) ensure that all proper precautions are taken to provide for the safety of patients, employees, and the public,
- B) minimize disruption of County health services, and
- C) empower facility administrators and on-site managers to make appropriate decisions on a situation-by-situation basis.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES:: There are three types of building closure situations:

A. Life Threatening Situations Requiring Building Closure:

When a significant emergency or disaster occurs that places patients, employees, and the public in immediate danger and the safety and security of the DHS building is threatened, the facility administrator, senior on-site manager, or their designee shall make the decision to evacuate the building (in accordance with Fire Safety Program evacuation procedures) or close the building, if absolutely necessary.

NOTE 1. If communication systems are functional, the

Director, DHS, (or designee) shall be notified and, in turn, will notify the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) of actions taken

NOTE 2. If communication systems are nonfunctional, the Director, DHS (or designee) shall be notified through the appropriate chain of command, of any actions taken as soon as possible,

NOTE 3. In a disaster resulting in the disruption of telephone and radio communications, DHS personnel will report to pre-designated locations without prior notification. These locations have been established in the disaster plans of each division/facility within the Department.

NOTE 4. If a closure of a health care facility is absolutely necessary, the Assistant Director, Personal Health Services and/or Assistant Director, Public Health Programs & Services, will coordinate any patient transfers,

Upon request, the DHS Medical Alert Center (MAC), (213) 887- 5381, will assist in making patient transfers.

B. Non Life-Threatening Situations:

When an emergency or disaster is not immediately life- threatening but poses a threat of escalating to that point, or damage to the building's contents make it impossible for employees to do their jobs, the appropriate Assistant Director or his/her designee shall make the decision as to whether the building will be closed.

I. If a building is closed or evacuated under these circumstances, communications to the Director, DHS, and CAO shall be conducted in the same manner as in Section A,

C. County Owned or Leased Buildings:

When an emergency situation arises in County owned buildings or privately owned buildings leased by the County, where the building manager may not be a DHS employee, DHS personnel should abide by the directives of the building manager. In this event, the senior DHS manager or his designee must report such directives immediately to the appropriate Assistant Director, who in turn will notify the Director, DHS, through the appropriate chain of command.

D. Deployment of Employees:

In any of the above situations, the appropriate Assistant Director must be notified immediately of any building closure prior to releasing employees. An assessment will be made as to whether employees should be immediately deployed to alternate work sites to await further instructions, or sent home with instructions to remain available for recall

COMMUNICATION WITH CAO::

During a significant disaster, the County Emergency Operations Center (EOC) will be functioning on a 24-hour basis.

If the DHS Director, facility administrators, senior on- site managers, or their designees cannot contact the Chief Administrative Officer directly, they should communicate with the CAO through the "on-duty" Assistant

Administrative Officer at the County EOC by calling (213) 267-2578.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Jan 25, 1995

SUPERCEDES: June 1, 1993

APPROVED: Signature on File
