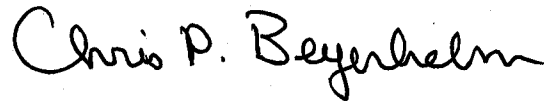


For: FSA Employees

Adding Hurricane Harvey Activity Codes in the Activity Reporting System (ARS)

Approved by: Associate Administrator for Operations and Management



1 Overview

A Background

Hurricane Harvey has caused severe damage along the gulf coast and to support the recovery FSA is anticipating significant disaster program participation. Therefore, new ARS **activity** codes are being created to be used for all FSA program work associated with the recovery effort.

Note: 21-AO will be amended to include information for reporting this activity code.

B Purpose

This notice provides OBF's approval and instructions for immediate use of the following when related to the Hurricane Harvey disaster:

- for administrative leave due to the disaster activity code "**Hurricane Harvey - Leave**" to replace the activity "Leave"
- for ARS program work related to the disaster, activity code:
 - "**Hurricane Harvey – Signup**" to replace the activity "**Signup & Eligib**"
 - "**Hurricane Harvey – Service**" to replace the activity "**Serv and Maint**"
 - "**Hurricane Harvey – Travel**" to replace the activity "**Travel**"
 - "**Hurricane Harvey - General**" to replace all other ARS activities.

C Contacts

For questions about this notice, contact the BPMS Team by e-mail to **BPMSUPDATE@wdc.usda.gov**.

Disposal Date	Distribution
April 1, 2018	All FSA employees; State Offices relay to County Offices

2 Using Hurricane Harvey Activity Codes

A General Information About Hurricane Harvey Administrative Leave and the ARS Activity Code “Hurricane Harvey – Leave” Usage

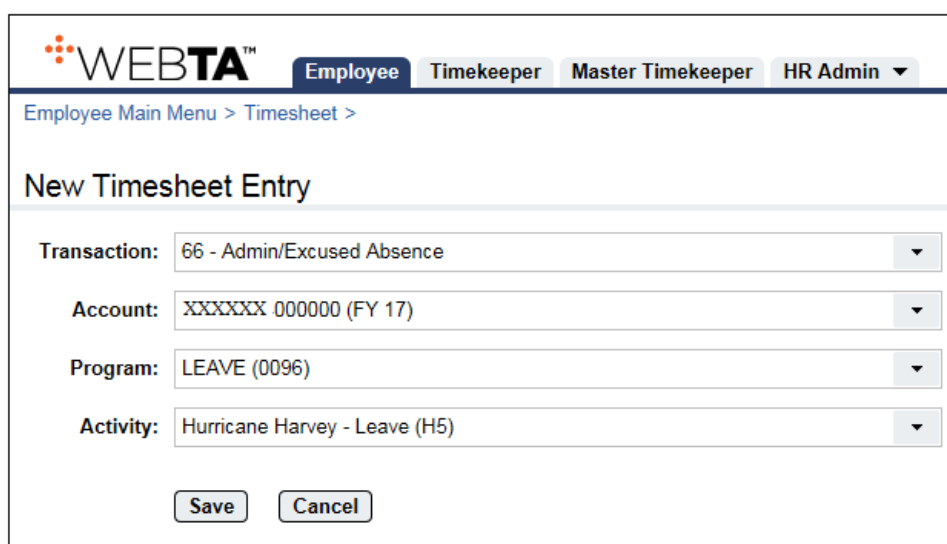
An employee who is faced with a personal emergency because of a public emergency may be granted administrative leave if the employee can be spared from his or her usual responsibilities. Employees affected by the Hurricane Harvey disaster who have been granted administrative leave should use the following guidance while coding time in WebTA. To track costs FSA has created the ARS activity code “**Hurricane Harvey – Leave**”. This activity code is required to be used in conjunction with approved administrative leave used due to the disaster. Reporting to this activity should be completed at the National, State and County Office levels of the agency by affected employees.

See Exhibit 1 for more information on “USDA Guidance – Pay and leave Benefits for Employees Affected by Severe Weather or Other Emergency Situation”.

The “**Hurricane Harvey – Leave**” code shall **not** be used with any other type of leave except for employees with approved administrative leave due to Hurricane Harvey.

Employees in the effected disaster area using administrative leave should record time in WebTA 4.2 as listed and shown below:

- **Transaction:** “66 – Admin/Excused Absence”
- **Account:** “Employee’s FY17 Accounting Code”
- **Program:** “Leave (0096)”
- **Activity:** “Hurricane Harvey – Leave (H5)”.



The screenshot shows the WebTA interface for a user with the role of 'Employee'. The breadcrumb trail is 'Employee Main Menu > Timesheet >'. The page title is 'New Timesheet Entry'. There are four dropdown menus for selecting the Transaction, Account, Program, and Activity. The Transaction is set to '66 - Admin/Excused Absence', the Account is 'XXXXXX 000000 (FY 17)', the Program is 'LEAVE (0096)', and the Activity is 'Hurricane Harvey - Leave (H5)'. At the bottom, there are 'Save' and 'Cancel' buttons.

Field	Value
Transaction	66 - Admin/Excused Absence
Account	XXXXXX 000000 (FY 17)
Program	LEAVE (0096)
Activity	Hurricane Harvey - Leave (H5)

For questions regarding the applicability of this administrative leave and leave policy **only**, contact Yolanda Provost at yolanda.provost@wdc.usda.gov or 202-205-9282.

2 Using Hurricane Harvey Activity Codes

A General Information About Hurricane Harvey Activity Codes

A request has been made for FSA employees to begin tracking programs involved in implementing Hurricane Harvey disaster relief. Reporting to these activities should be completed at the National, State and County Office levels of the agency. Effective immediately, to report this category, employees shall select appropriate Hurricane Harvey related activity from the "Activity" drop-down menu in WebTA/ARS; then select the appropriate program associated with the activity.

There are three Hurricane Harvey activity codes in ARS that mirror existing activity codes in ARS and one Hurricane Harvey activity code in ARS to capture all other activities. Those activity codes along with the activities they replace are as follows:

- activity code "**Hurricane Harvey - Signup**" to replace the activity "**Signup & Eligib**"
- activity code "**Hurricane Harvey - Service**" to replace the activity "**Serv & Maint**"
- activity code "**Hurricane Harvey - Travel**" to replace the activity "**Travel**"
- activity code "**Hurricane Harvey - General**" to replace all other ARS activities.

The "Hurricane Harvey - Signup" ARS activity code should be used in conjunction but not limited to the following programs:

- Emergency Conservation Program (ECP)
- Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP)
- Emergency Grazing Relief for Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)
- Emergency Livestock Assistance Program (ELAP)
- Common Programs (that is, AGI's, 1026's, new 902's)
- Noninsurable Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP)
- Farm Loan Programs Direct Loans (FLP-DL)
- Tree Assistance Program (TAP)
- Ad-hoc Disaster Assistance Programs.

When a program application is processed for program benefits directly related to the Hurricane Harvey disaster employees shall substitute the relevant Hurricane Harvey activity code for the corresponding regular activity code in ARS. The following examples illustrate when this would be appropriate.

Example 1: Producer works with County Office staff to submit ECP application for cost share assistance due to soil erosion caused by the Hurricane Harvey. Because this application directly relates to the Hurricane employees would use the relevant Hurricane Harvey activity code. In this example employees would code time to the ARS Program "**ECP**" and the ARS Activity "**Hurricane Harvey - Signup**".

2 Using Hurricane Harvey Activity Codes (Continued)

A General Information About Hurricane Harvey Activity Codes (Continued)

Example 2: County Office staff process a payment for an approved LIP application for sheep lost due to freeze that is unrelated to Hurricane Harvey. Because this application does **not** directly relate to the Hurricane employees would not use a Hurricane Harvey activity code. In this example employees would code time to the ARS Program “**LIP**” and the ARS Activity “**Serv & Maint**”.

Example 3: A Farm Loan Officer travels to inspect chattel related to an emergency loan issued in response to the Hurricane Harvey disaster. Because this application directly relates to the Hurricane employees would use the relevant Hurricane Harvey activity code. In this example employees would code time to the ARS Program “**FLP-DL**” and the ARS Activity “**Hurricane Harvey - Travel**”.

Example 4: A CED composes a GovDelivery bulletin to announce FSA programs available to assist producers effected by Hurricane Harvey. Because this application directly relates to the Hurricane employees would use the appropriate Hurricane Harvey activity code. According to the activity dictionary in 21-AO, work associated with composing a bulletin would fall under the ARS activity “**Outreach**” and accordingly would be coded to the ARS activity “**Hurricane Harvey - General**” which replaces all ARS activities that are not; “**Signup & Eligib**”, “**Serv & Maint**” or “**Travel**”. In this example employees would code time to the ARS Program “**Common**” and the ARS Activity “**Hurricane Harvey - General**”.

B “Hurricane Harvey - Signup” Activity Code General Information

The ARS activity code “**Hurricane Harvey - Signup**” should be used instead of the activity code “**Signup & Eligib**” when the program participation is related to damage caused by Hurricane Harvey. If program participation is **unrelated** to damage caused by Hurricane Harvey, employees shall **not** use the “**Hurricane Harvey - Signup**” ARS activity code.

The “**Hurricane Harvey - Signup**” ARS activity code should be used in conjunction with the following sub-activities.

- **Process Applications and Contracts:** Complete application forms and contracts all the way to an application decision. Includes time spent completing forms or helping customers complete forms and resolve problems.
- **Determine Eligibility/Feasibility for Program Participation:** Determine if customer and farm meet program criteria. Determine credit worthiness and eligibility for loan or contract.
- **Loan or Contract Determination:** Approve or disapprove loan or contract. Prepare and assemble all agreements, disclosures, deeds, instruments, title documents, loan records, lien notices, etc. for signing. Disburse loan funds.

2 Using Hurricane Harvey Activity Codes (Continued)

B "Hurricane Harvey - Signup" Activity Code General Information (Continued)

The following key tasks are associated with the ARS activity sub-activities for “**Hurricane Harvey - Signup**”. (See 21-AO, Exhibit 4, pages 25-27 for a complete list of key tasks.)

- Process Applications and Contracts
 - Communicate and distribute information to customer.
 - Collect fees.
 - Assist customer in forms completion.
 - Process transfer and assumption applications.
 - Process forms and enter in automated systems.
 - Assemble application.
- Determine Eligibility/Feasibility for Program Participation
 - Complete Eligibility Reviews.
 - Complete/verify AGI Certification.
 - Complete/verify Actively Engaged Determination.
 - Complete/verify Person Determination.
 - Determine land eligibility, including soil.
 - Complete/verify Wetland and Sod/Swamp Compliance.
 - Verify crop insurance, NAP, or CAT coverage or waiver.
 - Determine livestock eligibility.
 - Establish Farm Units.
 - Research production records for new applications.
 - Review/process lien searches and lien waivers.
 - Determine if customer meets term and loan limit.
 - Assist with balance sheet and cash flow.
 - Process income expense trend and credit presentation report.
 - Perform appraisals, new applications.
 - Request appraisals from contractors, new applications.
 - Review appraisals, new applications.

2 Using Hurricane Harvey Activity Codes (Continued)

C "Hurricane Harvey - Service" Activity Code General Information

The ARS activity code "**Hurricane Harvey - Service**" should be used instead of the activity code "**Serv and Maint**" when the program participation is related to damage caused by Hurricane Harvey. If program participation is **unrelated** to damage caused by Hurricane Harvey, employees shall **not** use the "**Hurricane Harvey - Service**" ARS activity code.

The "**Hurricane Harvey - Service**" ARS activity code should be used in conjunction with the following sub-activities.

- Manage Routine Accounts: Perform payment/repayment processing, record keeping, and customer correspondence. Perform routine maintenance and account reviews.
- Manage Delinquent Default/Distressed: Initiate and perform collections for compliance accounts violations and/or default accounts. Perform delinquent and default activities.
- Manage Forfeitures and Settlements: Plan and process acquisition or sale of loan collateral.
- Verify Customer Compliance: Verify compliance for area including, but not limited to field visits for direct loan servicing activities, land use determinations and referrals, spot checks, and nonacreage determination visits. Perform record checks and field visits to ensure that all crop and field requirements are being met.
- Manage Program Inventory Property and Equipment: Acquire, maintain, and dispose of property and equipment received because of default in FSA programs.

The following key tasks are associated with the ARS activity sub-activities for "**Hurricane Harvey - Service**". (See 21-AO, Exhibit 4, pages 22-24 for a complete list of key tasks.)

- Manage Routine Accounts
 - Correspondence relating to servicing and maintenance for active loans and contracts.
 - Complete payment reviews.
 - Issue program payments.
 - Process applications/invoices submitted for payment.
 - Process loss and damage claims.
 - Certify and sign (online) payment for NPS processing.
 - NAP Unit maintenance.
 - Reconciliation of supervised bank accounts.
 - Processing Loss Adjuster payment vouchers.
 - Annual review and documentation of crop insurance.
 - Research and rectify Non-Payment Register, Overpayment Register, and Reconciliation Report.

2 Using Hurricane Harvey Activity Codes (Continued)

C "Hurricane Harvey - Service" Activity Code General Information (Continued)

- Process assignments, joint payments, and setoffs.
- Review Appraisals, existing account.
- Prepare Appraisals for contractors, existing account.
- Process Disaster Set-Aside (1951-T).
- Run DALR\$.
- Release liens.
- Contract modification and/or termination.
- Archive and protect account records.
- Routine servicing actions.
- Routine lender servicing.
- Verify Customer Compliance
 - Maintain and update National Spotcheck Review Register.
 - Refer customer for required spotcheck.
 - Perform field visits to verify reported acres for late-filed acreage reports.
 - Perform monthly spot checks and reports including farm/field visits.
 - Perform spot check of commodity and/or production records.
 - Perform chattel and/or real estate inspections.
 - Perform recordkeeping review.
 - Conservation practice maintenance.
 - Conduct site investigations of former CCC inventory sites.
 - Process inspection report of construction activity.
 - Review of contracted field visit reports.
 - Verify compliance with HELC and wetlands.
 - Perform annual status review.
 - Review and/or verify production evidence.
 - Perform payment limitation reviews.
 - Review of producer information for AGI compliance.

D "Hurricane Harvey - Travel" Activity Code General Information

The ARS activity code "**Hurricane Harvey - Travel**" should be used instead of the activity code "**Travel**" when the program participation is related to damage caused by Hurricane Harvey. If program participation is **unrelated** to damage caused by Hurricane Harvey, employees shall **not** use the "**Hurricane Harvey - Travel**" ARS activity code.

The "**Hurricane Harvey - Travel**" ARS activity code should be used in conjunction with the sub-activity "Travel Time To and From Activities: Schedule and execute travel. Includes time spent planning and in-transit".

2 Using Hurricane Harvey Activity Codes (Continued)

D "Hurricane Harvey - Travel" Activity Code general information (Continued)

The following key tasks, as defined by 21-AO as **"Travel"**, are associated with the ARS activity sub-activity for **"Hurricane Harvey - Travel"**.

Prepare, authorize, and approve travel.

- Plan/schedule travel itinerary.
- Actual time spent traveling to and from destination.
- Prepare, submit, and/or approve travel voucher for payment.

E "Hurricane Harvey - General" Activity Code General Information

The ARS activity code **"Hurricane Harvey - General"** should be used to capture any activity which does not meet the definitions of **"Signup & Eligib"**, **"Serv & Maint"** and **"Travel"** when the program participation is related to damage caused by Hurricane Harvey. If program participation is **unrelated** to damage caused by Hurricane Harvey, employees shall **not** use the **"Hurricane Harvey - General"** ARS activity code.

The **"Hurricane Harvey - General"** ARS activity code should be used to replace the following activities:

- Appeal
- Program Policy Planning
- Acreage Reporting
- Training
- Environmental Compliance
- Farm Records
- Outreach
- Measurement Service
- Integrity Compliance
- Admin
- Civil Rights
- Economic Policy Analysis
- Finance and Accounting
- FOIA
- Budget
- HR
- Other Agency Support.

USDA GUIDANCE – Pay and Leave Benefits for Employees Affected by Severe Weather or Other Emergency Situation

Pay and Leave Benefits for Employees Prevented From Working in an Area Affected by Severe Weather Conditions or Other Emergency Situations

Administrative Leave for Personal Emergencies

An employee who is faced with a personal emergency because of a public emergency may be granted up to 40 hours of administrative leave if the employee can be spared from his or her usual responsibilities.

Unusual circumstances, such as the scope and severity of the public emergency may warrant the granting of additional administrative leave. Any request for administrative leave in excess of 40 hours must be submitted, in writing, to the Director, OHRM. The Director, OHRM, may grant up to an additional 40 hours of administrative leave on a case-by-case basis. The ASA may grant administrative leave in excess of 80 hours. Request will be sent to the Director, OHRM for concurrence. [DR 4060-630-002, Leave Administration – Excused Absence/Administrative Leave](#)

Payments for Employees Ordered to Evacuate

Agencies may authorize advance payments, evacuation payments, and payments for travel and subsistence expenses to employees who are ordered to evacuate from an area because of imminent danger to their lives as a result of a severe weather condition or other emergency situation. The head of an agency or designated official must make the determination that an employee was officially ordered or authorized to evacuate.

Advance Payments

An agency may make an advance payment to an employee who has received an order to evacuate, provided that, in the opinion of the agency head or designated official, payment in advance of the date on which the employee otherwise would be entitled to be paid is required to help the employee defray immediate expenses incidental to the evacuation. An authorized agency official must determine the time period (measured in days) to be used in computing the amount of the advance payment. The selected time period may not exceed 30 days.

Evacuation Payments

While an evacuation order is in effect, an agency may make evacuation payments to an affected employee who is prevented from performing the regular duties of his or her position (as if the employee had continued to perform those regular duties). The agency should make these payments on the employee's regular pay days when feasible, since evacuation payments reflect the employee's regular pay. Evacuation payments are not treated as a debt owed to the Federal Government. Employees who do not receive evacuation payments may be granted Administrative Leave/Excused absence.

[DR 2300-004, USDA Evacuation Policies and Procedures](#)

[DR 4050-550-003, Advances in Pay](#)

Emergency Leave Transfer Program

The President may direct OPM to establish an emergency leave transfer program to assist employees affected by an emergency or major disaster. The emergency leave transfer program permits employees in

USDA GUIDANCE – Pay and Leave Benefits for Employees Affected by Severe Weather or Other Emergency Situation

an executive agency to donate unused annual leave for transfer to employees of the same or other agencies who have been adversely affected by the emergency or major disaster and who need additional time off from work without having to use their own paid leave. If an agency believes there is a need to establish an emergency leave transfer program to assist employees affected by an emergency or major disaster and its aftermath, the agency should contact its OPM Human Capital Officer. Employees may not donate or receive leave under the emergency leave transfer program until OPM has established the program for a specific emergency or major disaster.

Paid Time Off

If appropriate, employees may request annual leave or sick leave, advance annual or sick leave, or donated leave from the agency's voluntary leave transfer and/or leave bank program for their own or a family member's medical emergency.

Alternative Work Schedules

Agencies may implement an alternative work schedule (AWS) instead of traditional fixed work schedules (e.g., 8 hours per day, 40 hours per week). Within rules established by the agency, AWS can enable employees to make use of work schedules that help the employee balance work and family or personal responsibilities.

Telework

Telework is the ability to work at a location other than an employee's "official duty station" and should be part of all agency emergency planning. Agencies may wish to consider greater use of telework during severe weather conditions or other emergency situations and for long-range strategic planning. In emergency situations, agencies may designate the location of the employee's reporting office prior to the emergency as the official worksite for location-based pay entitlements, such as locality pay and special rates. [DR 4080-811-002, Telework Program](#)