

Firms Use Technology to Plow Through Snow-Related Closures

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Michael A. Guariglia

The looming snowstorm—though it turned out to be much milder than expected—prompted New Jersey firms and branches to close early Jan. 26 and stay closed the next day.

But with totally electronic filing systems, mobile devices and virtual desktops, such short-term closures have little effect on the bottom line—and even less effect on workflow, they said.

“Quite honestly we had no choice yesterday,” said Michael Guariglia, managing partner of McCarter & English’s Newark office.

“Even if we wanted to open, we couldn’t” because of mass transit suspensions and travel suspensions, he added.

But the ability to work remotely meant it was business as usual for most firms.

Still, an interruption is at least somewhat perceivable when bills go out weeks later, Guariglia said.

“I think there’s always a bit of a blip in the billing,” he said. “Courts are closed, and many of the clients are closed too. ... I think that’s inevitable.”

A group of firms in the northern part of the state, including...McCarter & English, for several years have been putting their heads together when making that call: They communicate through an email chain in the lead-up to weather events.

Guariglia agreed: “I think that’s a good thing to know. I think it reinforces the decision-making here.”