

Working in Severe Weather Policy

1. Introduction

This organisation is committed to ensuring the health, safety and wellbeing of all staff. We will maintain a fair and consistent approach with any concerns relating to the travel, commuting and transport of all staff and volunteers involved with the organisation.

The organisation recognises staff may face difficulties attending the place of work and returning home during periods of severe weather such as snow, floods, storms, wind etc. However, the organisation is committed to continuing to provide its services with minimal disruption during any severe weather conditions.

This document does not form part of a contract of employment and may be changed from time to time in line with current best practice and statutory requirements, and to ensure business needs are met. Staff will be consulted and advised of any changes as far in advance as possible of the change being made, unless the change is required by law.

2. Policy Aims

To outline responsibilities for all staff and managers when attendance at the work place could potentially result in risk to health, safety and wellbeing.

To outline appropriate procedures for all staff and managers to follow during any periods of severe weather.

Ensure all staff are safely able to travel to and from their place of work.

3. Weather Warnings

Red – High Risk to Life and Property

Dangerous weather is expected and action must be taken to keep everyone safe from the impact. It is very likely there will be a risk to life, with substantial disruption to travel, energy supplies and possibly widespread damage to property and infrastructure. Everyone should avoid travelling unless absolutely necessary and follow advice of emergency services and local authorities.

If the organisation chooses to close the office meaning that even if staff could attend, they would be unable to work, this will be processed as paid leave.

Amber – Risk to Life and Property

There is an increased likelihood of impact from severe weather which could potentially disrupt travel. There is a possibility of travel delays, road and rail closures, power cuts and the potential risk to life and property. Consider if travelling is necessary or if alternative arrangements could be made. Take action to protect everyone and property.

If the organisation chooses to close the office meaning that even if staff could attend, they would be unable to work, this will be processed as paid leave.

Yellow – Low Risk to Life and Property

Yellow warnings can be issued for a range of weather situations when it is likely the weather will cause some low level impacts, including some disruption to travel. Most will be able to continue with their daily routine but some will be directly impacted such as those in rural locations and/or mobility issues.

If the organisation chooses to close the office meaning that even if staff could attend, they would be unable to work, this will be processed as paid leave.

4. Responsibilities

Staff Responsibilities

Staff should not put themselves at unnecessary risk during severe weather but, should make every effort to attend work. This may include altering the method of travel even if this results in being late for work – any lateness will not be expected to be worked back.

In the event of severe weather, staff must contact their line manager to advise of any potential lateness or inability to get to the workplace as soon as possible in line with the absence procedures. Failure to comply may result in the absence being treated as unauthorised and result in disciplinary action.

Manager Responsibilities

Managers will ensure all staff are treated fairly with consideration given to individual circumstances.

When deciding whether or not it is reasonable for a member of staff to be expected to attend the workplace, the following will be considered:

- Health, safety and wellbeing of the staff member including mobility
- Operational requirements
- Distance/method to travel to work
- Current and expected weather conditions
- Local authority/met office guidance
- Caring responsibilities

The decision on what support may or may not be offered as well as whether any required leave is paid or unpaid will be made on an individual basis taking the above factors into consideration.

Organisation Responsibilities

To ensure fair, equal, reasonable and consistent treatment of all staff regarding any aspect of the implementation of this policy.

To ensure all those with line management responsibility are reasonably trained in the practical application of this policy.

To regularly review and update this policy in line with legislation and best practice.

5. Alternative Arrangements

Staff should make every effort to attend work during Amber and Yellow severe weather without putting themselves at risk. If it is unavoidable, staff can agree with their line manager for one or more of the following alternative arrangements:-

- Work from home
- Make up any time taken
- Use annual leave
- Take unpaid leave
- Paid leave will only be authorised in certain circumstances at the discretion of management.
- Reallocate days off

6. School, Nursery & Carer Unavailability

Should severe weather result in the closure of a school or nursery or a carer being unavailable, this should be processed as special/family leave. All reasonable steps should be taken by the staff member to make alternative arrangements. The organisation will consider whether or not to pay the staff member for one or more days until the school/nursery reopens or alternative arrangements can be made.

7. Time Off In Lieu

For any severe weather which occurs on a public holiday and for those staff who have pre-planned annual leave or those absent from work for any other reason such as maternity leave, paternity leave, shared parental leave, sickness/absence, adoption leave etc will not be entitled to claim any time back.

8. Data Protection Act 2018

The organisation will treat all personal data in line with obligations under the current data protection regulations.