

# Adverse Weather Policy & Procedure

## Version: 1.4

*Our Staff Values*  
**Focus. Passion. Inspiration.**



**North Ayrshire Council**  
Comhairle Siorrachd Àir a Tuath

## Adverse Weather Policy & Procedure

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<b>Related Forms/ Templates</b>	All of the template letters and forms referenced in this document are available on <u><a href="#">Connects</a></u>
<b>Related documents</b>	➤ A Fair Work Charter for Severe Weather (Scottish Government and STUC – November 2018)

<b>Version Number</b>	<b>Effective Date</b>	<b>Details of Last Revision</b>
1.4	02.12.19	Updated terminology and formatting
1.3	17.01.19	Updated in light of STUC guidance
1.2	07.10.14	Updated onto new policy template

<b>Equality Impact Assessment</b>	28 <sup>th</sup> November 2018
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## **1. Policy Statement**

### **1.1 Policy Purpose and Scope**

- 1.1.1 The purpose of this policy is to provide a mutually acceptable and well-publicised procedure for attendance at work in times of adverse weather conditions. Whilst the Council will treat those employees that encounter difficulties in attending work during adverse weather conditions in a sympathetic manner, it must also be recognised that, where possible, critical services have to be maintained in order to ensure business continuity.
- 1.1.2 The aim of this policy is to provide mutually acceptable working practices whilst making every effort to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of employees.
- 1.1.3 In general where an employee's workplace (or reasonable alternative workplace) remains open but the employee cannot make it to that workplace then managers and employees will be expected to discuss and agree on one of the options other than attending work.
- 1.1.4 If however, an employee's workplace is closed, with no alternative (which may include working from home), then these hours will be paid to the employee.
- 1.1.5 The Policy applies to all Council employees but please note paragraph 14 which specifically applies to those employees who work in schools.

### **1.2 Critical Services and Essential Roles**

- 1.2.1 For the purposes of providing services that are deemed critical during adverse weather it may become necessary to designate some employees as being in "essential roles". Such post holders should know that this may be the case as part of their working arrangements.
- 1.2.2 Whilst no employee should be subjected to an unacceptable degree of risk to their Health and Safety to travel to and from work, or carrying out their duties whilst at work, such employees are expected to make an enhanced effort to attend work. This may require additional support from the Council and its Community Planning Partners, including the emergency services, to help them travel to and from work and/or to carry out their duties whilst at work. Such employees should be made aware when they have been designated as being in an essential role and advised when this arrangement no longer applies. These roles are specified in the service Business Continuity Plan.
- 1.2.3 The Business Continuity Strategy should be referred to by services in assessing critical services and "essential roles".

## **2. Responsibilities**

### **2.1 Manager Responsibilities**

- 2.1.1 It is the responsibility of Managers to ensure all employees know and understand the procedure related to attendance at work during adverse weather conditions. It is also the responsibility of managers to ensure the appropriate Health and Safety measures are in place.
- 2.1.2 Managers should discuss, on an individual basis, employee travel arrangements (commuter mapping) and the individual considerations associated. Where employees have the ability to work from home, or from other locations/bases, this should be communicated and agreed.
- 2.1.3 Managers should make sure the service has appropriate business continuity plans and equipment in place. Managers should advise employees to utilise the met office weather alert system.

### **2.2 Employee Responsibilities**

- 2.2.1 It is the employee's responsibility to make every endeavour to travel and attend their place of work. The Council accepts however, that there are circumstances that arise which make it difficult for an employee to comply with that condition of their employment, one of which is adverse weather conditions.
- 2.2.2 It is the responsibility of employees to comply with the procedures to be followed in the event of adverse weather conditions. Furthermore, employees should ensure no unreasonable risks are attempted in getting to work and if in doubt should consult their manager for advice and guidance.
- 2.2.3 Employee's should register for weather alerts and prepare for adverse weather. This would include ensuring that laptops/equipment is taken home to allow working from home should weather conditions prevail.

## **3. Health and Safety Arrangements**

- 3.1 Managers and senior members of staff at each workplace location must ensure that there is a safe place of work for employees, contractors on site, and for members of the public, where applicable.
- 3.2 Managers, senior officers, first aiders and fire wardens may be absent from work due to adverse weather conditions. Nominated senior officers must ensure that in each workplace location, a safe working environment is maintained and that alternative and interim fire safety and building evacuation procedures are in place, should that be necessary.

## **4. Adverse Weather Forecast Prior to Working Hours**

### **4.1 Meeting of Chief Officers Group**

- 4.1.1 Chief Officers should be kept advised by managers and supervisors of the impact of severe weather on staffing levels and service delivery. In turn Chief Officers should keep the Council's Communication team updated. This will enable guidance/information to be issued or accessed via one or more of the following sources – Facebook, Twitter, Council Website, Text message, Council Customer Contact Centre, first line and senior managers
- 4.1.2 Depending on the likelihood and/or impact of severe weather, procedures detailed in the Civil Contingencies Response and Recovery Plan will be implemented. This may involve the establishment of an Emergency Control Centre to coordinate an emergency response.
- 4.1.3 A meeting of Chief Officers may be convened where decision to close Council buildings or send employees home early is being considered. This may be the case during any red alerts which impact the Council area, or commuter routes.

### **4.2 Requirement to Notify Manager / Workplace**

- 4.2.1 Even where adverse weather alerts are issued, employees are still required to contact their manager to discuss their intentions in relation to attending work and to discuss other options if this is not possible as outlined below

## **5. Pre-Adverse Weather Event Staff Consultation**

- 5.1 When it is forecast that adverse weather may affect an employee's ability to attend or continue in work, services should;
- a. consult with employees on the extent of their commute and any specific considerations.
  - b. consider individual circumstances, put in place alternative working and IT solutions where appropriate and hold an awareness of staff commuting arrangements.
  - c. Ensure that employees with the ability to work from home take the appropriate resources home with them (eg documents, laptop) and are aware of the GDPR requirements when doing so.
  - d. Encourage employees to register for the Met Office weather alerts.

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- e. Ensure that information gathered is reflected in Business Continuity Plans, where appropriate.

### **6. Notification Procedure – Unable to Attend**

#### **6.1 Employee Notification**

- 6.1.1 Where an employee experiences substantial difficulty in attending work due to adverse weather conditions, they should notify their respective line manager or other senior member of staff immediately to explain the circumstances.

#### **6.2 Failure to Notify Managers of Non-Attendance**

- 6.2.1 Employees who fail to notify their manager that day (except in extenuating circumstances) that they are unable to attend work should be regarded as being on unauthorised absence and managers should consider arranging a deduction from the pay of such employees in consultation with Human Resources.
- 6.2.2 On return to work managers should meet with employees as soon as possible to discuss non-notification. Managers should then take appropriate action depending on the reason for non-notification.

### **7. Employees who are able to attend their normal place of work**

- 7.1 Where a manager is notified that an employee is having difficulty attending work on time due to adverse weather conditions, it should be determined if the employee can travel to their normal place of work safely. If this is possible but normal starting times cannot be complied with, sympathetic consideration should be given to agreeing a temporary adjustment to the start/stop times of employees so affected.
- 7.2 For employees who are able to attend work, the prevailing weather conditions should be monitored throughout the day, against the criticality of service and the safety of non-essential employees' ability to travel home safely.
- 7.3 If the weather forecast shows that it may prevent those in a non-essential role from getting home then they should be permitted to leave to travel home at the earliest opportunity. This may be communicated via the Chief Officer group or appropriate local managers.

## **8. Employees who Cannot Attend Their Normal Place of Work**

- 8.1 Where a manager is made aware that an employee cannot attend their normal place of work then the employee should be requested to report to a relevant North Ayrshire Council work location nearer their home which is accessible.
- 8.2 Staff with the ability to work from home should use this facility in order to support their service as required (see section 9).
- 8.3 Employees who do not have a 'normal place of work', should discuss with their manager where they should report to during periods of adverse weather. Employees whose work requires them to visit various locations in the community should advise their manager if they are unable to reach all locations and be advised where they should attend for work.

## **9. Employees who Cannot Attend Their Normal or Alternative Place of Work**

### **9.1 Working from Home**

- 9.1.1 If informed that an employee cannot attend any place of work, then the manager may, after discussion, and if appropriate, authorise the employee to work from home.
- 9.1.2 Ahead of any prevailing adverse conditions services should set critical staff up with IT equipment and advise of expectations to take the equipment home.

### **9.2 Using Flexi or Annual Leave or Other Types of Leave**

- 9.2.1 Where employees cannot attend work due to adverse weather conditions a reasonable request to utilise flexi leave or annual leave should be granted.
- 9.2.2. Some employees may have caring responsibilities for others which necessitates that they cannot attend work due to the disruption to the care arrangements of their dependents. As well as the options outlined in this policy, the Special Leave and Carers Leave policy should also be considered when supporting such employees.

## **10. Employees who participate in the Flexible Working Scheme**

- 10.1. Where employees participate in the Flexible Working Scheme, the flexibility allowed within the scheme should be sufficient to accommodate any disruption to public transport timetables, i.e. start and stop times of between 7.30 am and 7pm from Monday to Friday.

- 10.2. Employees will be expected to make up anytime lost attending work due to adverse weather conditions.

### **11. Employees who don't participate in the Flexible Working Scheme**

- 11.1 Employees who do not participate in flexi-time arrangements may, at the discretion of managers, make up lost time by starting earlier, taking shorter lunch breaks and/or finishing later over a number of days after their non-attendance. Where necessary shift rosters and/or working time may be altered in consultation with the individuals so concerned.

### **12. Employees Affected by the Withdrawal or Reduction of Public Transport Facilities**

- 12.1 A manager or employee may be able to arrange transport to work for employees affected by the withdrawal or reduction of public transport facilities. Council vehicles may be legitimately utilised for this purpose during adverse weather conditions or, if safe to do so, employees with their own cars may assist those without into their place of work.

### **13. Adverse Weather Occurring During Working Hours**

- 13.1 Where adverse weather conditions arise during the working day, every effort will be made to convene a meeting of Chief Officers so that guidance about attending work can be issued (see section 4).
- 13.2 It will normally be the case that employees should be released only when there is evidence that they will personally encounter difficulty in reaching their home at a reasonable time. This necessarily means that those employees who will not encounter difficulties, and any other essential staff, should remain at work until the normal finishing time in order to maintain services.

### **14. Additional Information for Employees Working in Schools**

- 14.1 Appropriate employees within Education & Youth Employment should refer to standard circular M1 which gives further details on the issues which may affect schools.

### **15. Alternative Operational Arrangements**

- 15.1 Every reasonable effort will be made to open all Council Offices and other establishments. Each Service will co-ordinate its own operational services including decisions on establishment closures, after consultation with appropriate Head of Service or Director, should that become necessary.

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- 15.2 Where employees are directed to premises, other than their normal place of work, as a consequence of adverse weather conditions, then, any additional travel expenditure should be reimbursed. Where employees use public transport, they will require to produce receipts/ tickets. Where employees use their own car, they will be reimbursed at the excess travel rate for the additional miles incurred. Where employees share cars, then passengers who incur no additional costs will be ineligible to claim any reimbursement.

### **16. Monitoring of Policy and Procedures**

- 16.1 The policy will be reviewed after each period of adverse weather which affects the working arrangements of North Ayrshire Council employees. Such a review will take place in consultation with representatives of Services.

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## Notifications Procedure Flowchart (for non-essential roles)

