



**Workforce**

**Adverse Weather Policy: guide for employees**

This guide will help you to understand the Adverse Weather Policy.

The following guide forms part of the standard for workforce policies.

These policies apply to all eligible staff within NHS Scotland, regardless of the board you are employed by. The guide covers:

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# What is the purpose of the Adverse Weather Policy?

This policy explains what to do when severe weather affects your safety or your ability to get to your workplace.

## Who is covered by this policy?

This policy applies to:

- all employees
- bank, agency, and sessional workers
- secondees, volunteers, and contractors
- anyone on placement, such as students, trainees, or those on work experience

## Employee responsibilities

As an employee, you should:

- Take responsibility for your own health and safety when travelling for work. This includes your commute and any travel that is part of your job.
- Plan ahead if a weather warning is issued and consider alternative travel options.
- Make every reasonable effort to get to work during bad weather.
- Stay in regular contact with your line manager and colleagues as needed.

## Planning for adverse weather

Checking local travel and transport updates can help you understand the likely impact of bad weather. Understanding the weather warning colours can also help you prepare.

## Red weather warning

Extreme weather is expected. Red means you should take action now to keep yourself and others safe from the impact of the weather.

Widespread damage, travel and power disruption and risk to life are likely. You must avoid dangerous areas and follow the advice of the emergency services and local authorities.

## **Amber weather warning**

There is an increased likelihood of bad weather affecting you. This could disrupt your plans and cause travel delays, road and rail closures, interruptions to power and the potential risk to life and property. Amber means you need to be prepared to change your plans and protect you, your family and your community from the severe weather impacts based on the Met Office's forecast.

## **Yellow weather warning**

Severe weather is possible over the next few days and could affect you. Yellow means that you should plan ahead, thinking about possible travel delays or disruptions to your day-to-day activities. The Met Office is monitoring the developing weather situation, and Yellow means keep an eye on the latest forecast and be aware that the weather may change or worsen, leading to disruption of your plans in the next few days.

You can find the latest updates on the [Met Office website](#).

## **Making a plan with your manager**

You should act early to reduce any problems. Tell your manager about your situation and travel plans. Make sure your manager has your correct contact details so you can stay in touch.

Your manager may discuss alternative work options with you to prioritise your safety while continuing work where possible. These may include:

- swapping shifts
- working from home
- working at another site
- working shorter hours

You should agree with your manager on how you'll confirm your safe arrival after travelling to and from work.

## **Provision for special leave**

If no other option is possible, you may be offered paid special leave if severe weather stops you from getting to work. This is managed according to the [NHS Scotland Special Leave Policy](#).

You should not be disadvantaged if you cannot get to work for reasons beyond your control. Special leave may still be offered after a weather warning has ended if there is still major disruption to transport.

## **Provision of essential services**

Your manager will consider your personal circumstances when reviewing service needs. You should not take unnecessary risks to get to work and must consider if it is safe to travel, based on official advice.

If a service needs to close or service provision changes, your manager will try to let you know as early as possible.

In these situations, you may be deployed to another area or location to help maintain essential services. If you cannot be deployed or work from another location, including home, you will receive full payment for the shift.

If you drive for work during bad weather, agree with your manager how often you will contact them to confirm your safety and location.

## **Provisions for working on other sites and across board boundaries**

If you cannot get to your usual workplace, you must contact your manager as soon as you can. They may ask you to work at another location, either within your board or across board boundaries. This depends on existing arrangements and requires the agreement of the alternative NHS facility.

## **Arrangements for working at home**

Your manager may ask you to work from home. This depends on 2 things:

- Your role must be suitable for home working.
- You are not needed to help maintain essential services elsewhere.

## **Provision for remaining on the premises**

If you stay at your workplace because of travel disruption, or if you agree to stay to provide cover, you will be offered:

- free accommodation, but the type and availability may vary
- regular meals and drinks
- appropriate pay or time off in lieu

You should not be asked to continue working outside of your regular working hours if you are unable to return home.

## **Provision for shorter working hours**

Your manager may arrange earlier finish times or change shift patterns to help you get home safely, especially if you have a long journey.

If many people are leaving at once, departure times may be staggered. If you leave early, you will still be paid for your full shift.

If you arrive late due to travel difficulties, you will also be paid for your full shift. If official advice recommends avoiding peak travel, flexible working may be introduced to help you travel safely.

You are encouraged to attend work where it is safe and practical. Even if it is only for part of your shift, it will help maintain essential services.

## **Useful links**

- [About WeatherReady](#)
- [NHS Scotland Special Leave Policy](#)