

Bridgewater Housing Association Ltd Policy

**Approved by
committee on:** 20 February 2019
Review Date: 2022
Ref:
Adverse Weather

1. INTRODUCTION

Bridgewater Housing Association recognises, as an employer, it has a duty under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999, as amended, to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that its working environment for all employees is healthy and safe.

2. PURPOSE

This policy has been introduced as Bridgewater Housing Association's response to adverse weather as well as its duty of care for the health and welfare of all employees and customers.

3. SCOPE

This policy applies to staff members.

4. WEATHER WARNINGS

Please note the Association will use the recognised Met Office Weather alert system for information (as well as national news coverage and Renfrewshire Council's Civil Contingencies service). These warnings are given a colour depending on a combination of both the impact the weather may have and the likelihood of those impacts occurring:

4.1 Yellow Warning

Yellow warnings can be issued for a range of weather situations. Many are issued when it is likely that the weather will cause some low level impacts, including some disruption to travel in a few places. Many people may be able to continue with their daily routine, but there will be some that will be directly impacted and so it is important to assess if you could be affected. Other yellow warnings are issued when the weather could bring much more severe impacts to the majority of people but the certainty of those impacts occurring is much lower. It is important to read the content of yellow warnings to determine which weather situation is being covered by the yellow warning.

4.2 Amber Warning

There is an increased likelihood of impacts from severe weather, which could potentially disrupt your plans. This means there is the possibility of travel delays, road and rail closures, power cuts and the potential risk to life and property. You should think about changing your plans and taking action to protect yourself and your property. You may want to consider the impact of the weather on your family and your community and whether there is anything you need to do ahead of the severe weather to minimise the impact.

4.3 Red Warning

Dangerous weather is expected and, if you haven't already done so, you should take action now to keep yourself and others safe from the impact of the severe weather. It is very likely that there will be a risk to life, with substantial disruption to travel, energy supplies and possibly widespread damage to property and infrastructure. You should avoid travelling, where possible, and follow the advice of the emergency services and local authorities.

5. PROCEDURES TO BE FOLLOWED IN THE EVENT OF ADVERSE WEATHER

5.1 Red Warning

- In the event of a red warning being issued, as soon as this is known the office will close and all staff will be sent home with immediate effect.
- If this information is known the night before, all staff should be contacted via the chain of command and instructed not to travel to the office. Managers will put emergency closure measures in place.
- The office will remain closed until the red warning has been lifted.
- There will be a common sense approach taken for staff who are at work when a red warning is issued e.g. those travelling the furthest should be given permission to leave soonest.
- Staff will not be required to work from home or take any flexi/TOIL during red warnings. For those on leave/flexi/toil during the red warning, they will be credited with the time during which the office is closed.
- Staff living locally will not be required to come to work during any red warnings.
- Staff should not return to work during any red warnings even if they consider it safe to do so.
- Staff should only return to work once the red warning has been lifted. Managers will contact their teams and agree a course of action.
- All staff share a responsibility to monitor weather conditions and forecast warnings.

5.1 Amber Warning

- In the event of an amber warning being issued, as soon as this is known the Association will take measures to ensure safe travel and a safe working environment for staff.
- This may include cancelling appointments, meetings or home visits and advising that the Small Repairs Service may be restricted or cancelled. This may also affect repairs services provided by our approved contractors.
- Staff, particularly but not exclusively, may choose different measures to deal with adverse weather. Some staff can work from home providing approval is provided by the departmental manager. Some staff may choose to take annual leave or flexi. In extreme circumstances unpaid leave will be looked on favourably. For those already on leave/flexi/TOIL there will be no change in their status and they will be credited with the relevant time.
- There is no expectation that staff who live locally and can walk to work, will do this in all cases.
- The key difference between red and amber warnings is that for red, the office will automatically close. Amber will mean the office may close depending on weather conditions and safety considerations
- All staff share a responsibility to monitor weather conditions and forecast warnings.

6. WEATHER IN OTHER AREAS

As the Association employs staff living in other local authority areas, there is a possibility that there will be different weather warnings in place across the country. There will be a common sense approach taken to allow:

- Staff to work from home if they have enough notice
- The use of leave/flexi/TOIL when required

7. CONTRACTORS

Contractors will suffer from the same difficulties as staff in adverse weather and it is likely that their services will be disrupted. Consequently the Association's communications should direct customers to emergency contractors and they will advise as appropriate.

8. COMMUNICATIONS

8.1 Staff

The Chief Executive will assume the chain of command for decision making during this period and confirm with managers that all staff have been contacted successfully. The following staff members are responsible for communication and keeping their team members updated as follows:

- Chief Executive - Senior Managers and Office Administrator
- Corporate Services Manager - Care & Repair and IT staff
- Housing Services Manager - Housing and Housing Support staff
- Technical Services Manager - Technical staff and consultant Clerk of Works
- Head of Finance - Finance staff and Finance consultant

Please note it is the responsibility of the Managers to determine the method of contact e.g. email, text, WhatsApp, telephone, mobile staff app, etc. and to ensure the communication is effective including back up arrangements during their annual leave or sickness absence. Managers should ensure that an effective system is put in place in good time prior to any emergency taking place.

8.2 Others

- The Chief Executive will update the Chair of the Association on a daily basis.
- The Care & Repair team will be responsible for communication with customers regarding home visits and small repairs.
- The Technical Services Manager will be responsible for communications involving the repairs service and contractors.
- The Housing Management Team will be responsible for communication with customers regarding housing appointments
- The ICT Officer will be responsible for updating the website, social media messages and the telephone answering message.

9. OTHER POLICIES & DOCUMENTS

- EVH Travel Disruption Information Note – see attached
- Homeworking
- Lone working
- Health & Safety Control Manual – Section 3.21

9. GDPR

Contact details for all staff are contained in the emergency contact list. The Association's Employee Fair Processing Notice states that staff contact details eg address, telephone number are collected. In addition, the distribution of this list to all staff falls into the legitimate interest category eg using your personal data in ways you would reasonably expect. In this instance for contact in emergency scenarios.

8. SUMMARY

This policy will be reviewed in 2023.



supporting
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Travel Disruption Information Note

HR Support Service

Reviewed: July 2017

Introduction

From time to time, travel disruption can affect an employee's ability to get to work on time or at all. These situations can arise from disruptions to public transport, air travel and severe weather conditions. Whilst organisations are committed to protecting the health and safety of all employees, an organisation must ensure that disruption to the services they provide are minimised. The information that follows applies to various types of travel disruption such as;

- Snow
- Rain/Flooding
- Delayed or cancelled flights returning from abroad for whatever reason
- Strikes
- One off environmental events

Communication

It is important that employers inform their employees of what is expected of them should their normal travel arrangements be disrupted and impacts their ability to attend to work. This should be clear, concise, in writing and issued in advance.

Pay

There is no legal right for staff to be paid by an employer if they are unable to get to work because of travel disruption (unless the travel itself is regarded as working time or in some situations where the employer provides transport). However, where possible, employers should allow employees to take:

- annual leave, or
- accumulated lieu time (where available) if agreed with their line manager, or
- home/remote working where suitable facilities exist or
- temporary flexible working arrangements if they can be accommodated by the organisation.

Where none of the above options are available or appropriate, unpaid leave should be given in most circumstances. However, individual organisations can use their own discretion with regards to pay as long as this is applied consistently throughout the organisation.

Employees Responsibilities

In the event of travel disruption, staff should make every effort to attend work as normal, but, should not put themselves at unnecessary risk in doing so. If an employee is unable to get to work, they must contact their line manager by telephone as soon as possible to inform them.

Whilst it would not be appropriate to discipline employees who were unable to attend work through no fault of their own, managers should be satisfied that the entire length of the delay was genuinely out with the employee's control. If the employer has reason to believe that the employee's conduct has contributed to not being unable to attend work the employer should conduct an appropriate investigation in line with their disciplinary procedures and act accordingly.

Further Information

- **EVH 0141 352 7435**