

# Weather Warnings Procedure and Guidance



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# 1. Adverse Weather Conditions – Home to Work Travel

Adverse weather, including tidal conditions at the Churchill Barriers, can happen at any time of year and especially over the winter months. They can present some significant challenges in providing services and/or individuals getting to and from work safely.

The safety of Council employees and of those using our services is of huge importance and we have policies and procedures in place that ensure we can continue to run services but that we keep you safe too.

It is a contractual requirement for all employees to ensure that they can get to their place of work. It is an individual's responsibility and decision, to make, based on their own risk assessment of the current conditions and anticipated conditions later in the day (when they are due to return home), their method of travel, their ability and experience, to determine if they can safely make it to and from their work in adverse weather conditions.

If you can't attend your normal place of work because of adverse weather, or tidal conditions on the Churchill Barriers, you must inform your manager as soon as you reasonably can. The Council is committed to ensuring that employees have a range of options open to them to avoid facing any reduction in pay in such scenarios.

In these circumstances, you will have the following options, to discuss with them:

- If your job allows it; you can work from home, or an alternative suitable work location agreed with your manager.
- You can make up the time at a future date, unless the work you do would not allow for this.
- If you are participating in the flexi-time scheme you could make up the time using time credits already accrued.
- Where you have already accrued Time off in Lieu (TOIL) you could make up the time using this.
- You can take annual leave.

It is expected that at least one of these options will be open to employees in such scenarios. In an exceptional circumstance where none of the options above can be agreed, managers are encouraged to further discuss the specific circumstances with HR as a final step to avoid an employee having to take unpaid leave.

Where you are a parent or carer and your child's school or nursery or a dependant's (who is resident with you) care service closes due to adverse weather - and you do not have emergency alternative care arrangements in place - you should discuss the options above with your manager. Remember time off for caring for dependants, whilst a statutory entitlement, is unpaid.

Where you are out of Orkney on Council business and are prevented from being able to return due to adverse weather, you will not require to make the time up.

Where you are out of Orkney on holiday, or for any other non-Council business reason, and you are prevented from returning to work as planned, you will be required to account for/make up any working time lost, as detailed above.

In circumstances of adverse weather as described above, the normal requirement for advance notice of a request to take annual leave etc. will be suspended.

Where you do not routinely work from home – either because it's not something that suits you or because of the type of work you do – it may be possible for exceptional temporary arrangements to be made to allow you to do so. You should discuss and agree this with your manager.

In exceptionally bad weather it may be that some Council facilities will be closed to staff. On days like this you may be asked to report to an alternative work location, be asked to go home early or be asked not to travel to work at all that day.

The Chief Executive (or deputising Director) will take such decisions based on the advice of the appropriate Director and/or Police Scotland.

In these circumstances you will still be paid for the day, and you won't have to take leave or make up any lost time.

These provisions do not apply to situations where buildings are closed to pupils or service users only; in such circumstances staff are expected to attend work as normal or where they cannot agree with their manager which of the above options will apply.

### **Essential Workers**

If you are in the type of job where you provide an essential service with health and safety implications for service users or the public - such as residential care or snow clearance and gritting, it is a contractual requirement to be at work, despite the weather conditions and your job falls out with these provisions. Where essential workers are at increased risk of being impacted by adverse weather conditions, due to where they live, managers should have proactive discussions with them to ensure they can safely fulfil their contractual obligations in the event of their travel to work being impacted.

### **Reasonable Adjustments**

Some employees may have individual circumstances which affect their ability to travel to work during adverse weather. Examples of this are pregnant employees or employees who have a disability. In these cases, managers should adopt a flexible approach and contact HR for advice if needed.

## 2. Adverse Weather Conditions – Travel as part of Work (Business Travel)

Adverse weather, including tidal conditions at the Churchill Barriers, can happen at any time of year and especially over the winter months. They can present some significant challenges in providing services and/or individuals undertaking their work role where this involves to and from different locations throughout Orkney.

The safety of Council employees and of those using our services is of huge importance and we have policies and procedures in place that ensure we can continue to run services but that we keep you safe too.

### Outwith Orkney Weather Warnings Procedure and Guidance

#### 1. Purpose

##### 1.1

To clearly set out the responsibilities and actions that should be taken in the event of a yellow, amber or red weather warning so that employees/elected members travelling, their line managers/equivalent and CLT members understand their part in any action required.

#### 2. Approach

##### 2.2

Employees and elected members are responsible for making themselves aware of current weather forecasts and information provided by the travel providers such as airports, ferry companies and rail services.

##### 2.2

The Met Office offer a weather warnings email service, and anyone can sign up via the following link to receive alerts: <https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/about-us/news-and-media/media-centre/subscribe-to-email-alerts>

##### 2.3

The safety of council employees and elected members is paramount and there should be discussion between the employee or elected member and their line manager or equivalent on whether it is safe to travel.

##### 2.4

Line managers are responsible for undertaking risk assessments in relation to travel and these must be carried out in the event of a weather warning to decide whether it is safe for their employee to travel, or to continue with the arrangements in place if they are already away from Orkney. Risk assessments\* should be retained by the manager for their own records; they do not need to be sent to anyone else. \*See Appendix 2.

### 3. Procedure in the event of a weather warning

3.1

On becoming aware of a weather warning that may impact outwith Orkney travel, the employee should bring this to the attention of their line manager to discuss the travel arrangements in place and what impact the weather may have on these.

3.2

The line manager is responsible for undertaking a risk assessment in relation to the travel (to be retained for their own records) and determining whether it is safe for the employee to undertake the travel arrangements currently in place. The Safety and Resilience team will provide advice to managers if required.

3.3

If the line manager determines that in the interest of health and safety that the employee should not undertake the travel arrangements currently in place, they must advise the travel team of their decision and what changes are required. In the event of a red warning, the employee themselves can also advise directly of amended requirements/cancellations.

### 4. Types of weather warning and anticipated actions

#### Yellow Warning: Be Aware

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.



It is the **line managers'** responsibility to:

- Review the travel arrangements in place.
- Consider carrying out a risk assessment to determine whether it is safe for the current travel arrangements to be undertaken.
- Advise the travel team of any changes required to travel arrangements.

### Amber Warning: Be Prepared

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.



It is the **line managers'** responsibility to:

- Review the travel arrangements in place.
- Carry out a risk assessment to determine whether it is safe for the current travel arrangements to be undertaken.
- Advise the travel team of any changes required to travel arrangements.

### Red Warning: Take Action

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.

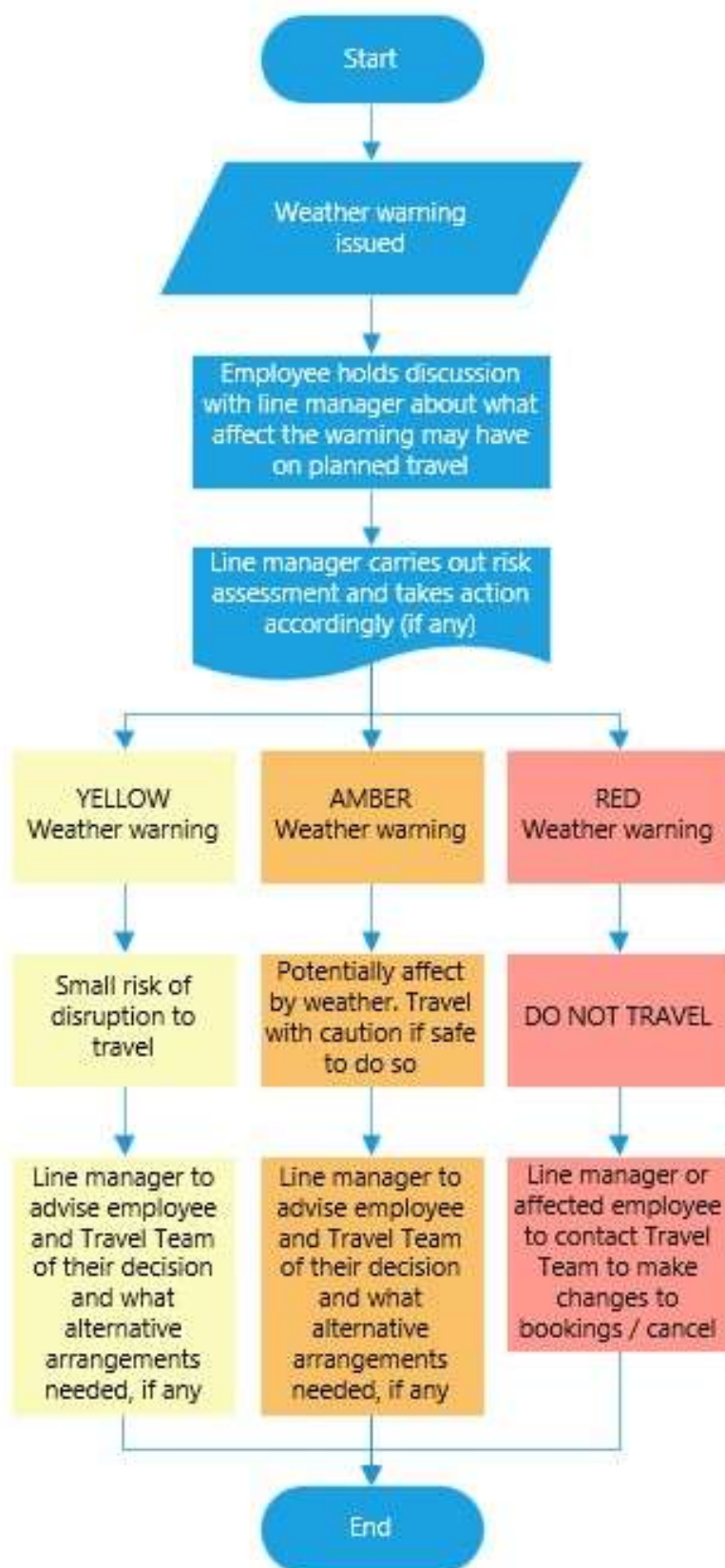
The Council's Corporate Leadership Team have agreed that in the event of a red warning affecting Orkney, and/or an area employees/elected members are due to travel to or through, all travel should be cancelled in the interests of safety. If an employee/elected member is already away from Orkney when a red warning is released, alternative arrangements must be made to fulfil the line managers duty to keep them from coming to harm, as far as possible. This includes additional nights' accommodation and re-arranging flights etc.



The **line manager or employee** must:

- Review the travel arrangements in place.
- Advise the travel team of any changes required to the travel arrangements including complete cancellation.

## Appendix 1: Flowchart for procedure in the event of a weather warning affecting outwith Orkney travel



## Appendix 2: Risk assessment template

### ORKNEY ISLANDS COUNCIL

### HEALTH AND SAFETY RISK ASSESSMENT

Service:

Workplace:

Description of work activity or area of the workplace assessed:

Persons at risk from the hazards identified:

Risk assessed by:                      Date risk assessed:

Risk assessment review date: dd/mm/yyyy

Hazards	Who might be harmed? (e.g. staff, service-users public etc.)	How will they be harmed?	Existing risk control measures	Risk Evaluation (Severity X Likelihood)			Additional Control	Risk Evaluation (Severity X Likelihood)			Action by whom?	Action by when?
				S (1-5)	L (1-5)	Rating		S (1-5)	L (1-5)	Rating		



Likelihood/Severity Definitions:	
<b>Likelihood</b>	
Very Unlikely (1)	there's a 1 in a million chance of the hazardous event happening
Unlikely (2)	There's a 1 in 100,000 chance of the hazardous event happening
Fairly likely (3)	There's a 1 in 10,000 chance of the hazardous event happening
Likely (4)	There's a 1 in 1,000 chance of the hazardous event happening
Very likely (5)	there's a 1 in 100 chance of the hazardous event happening
<b>Severity</b>	
Insignificant (1)	No injury
Minor (2)	Minor injuries leading to first aid
Moderate (3)	Up to three days' absence
Major (4)	More than seven days' absence
Catastrophic (5)	Death.

### Risk Matrix

Likelihood/Severity	Negligible (1)	Minor (2)	Moderate (3)	Major (4)	Extreme (5)
Almost Certain (5)	5	10	15	20	25
Likely (4)	4	8	12	16	20
Possible (3)	3	6	9	12	15
Unlikely (2)	2	4	6	8	10
Rare (1)	1	2	3	4	5

Low = 1 to 2		No action required
Low = 3 to 6		Look to improve at next review of if there is a significant change
Medium = 8 to 12		Remedial action required as soon as is reasonably practicable. The higher the risk rating, the greater the priority for action
High = 15 to 16		Take immediate action and stop activity if necessary, maintain existing controls rigorously.
High = 20 to 25		Stop activity and take immediate action.

The risk rating is then calculated by multiplying the severity and likelihood figures.