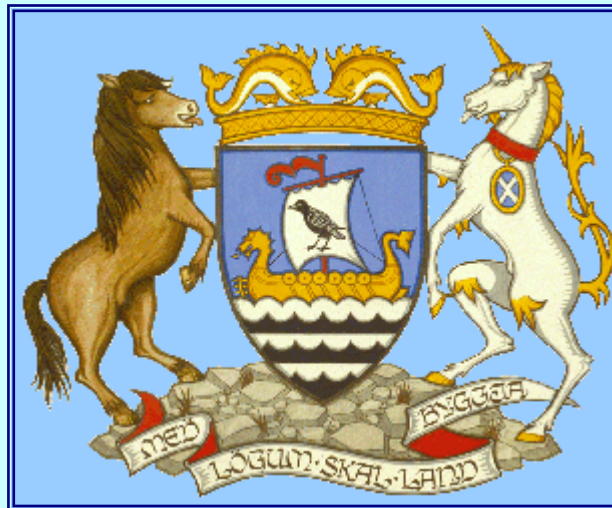


SHETLAND ISLANDS COUNCIL

ADVERSE WEATHER POLICY



Operational Date: 22 October 2008

Applies to: All staff except school based teaching staff

ADVERSE WEATHER POLICY

Operational Date: 22 October 2008

Review Date: 12 February 2011

1	INTRODUCTION	2
2	SCOPE OF POLICY	2
3	EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITY	2
4	EMPLOYEE NON-ATTENDANCE AT WORK	2
5	EMPLOYEE REPORTING LATE FOR WORK	3
6	EMPLOYEE LEAVING EARLY FROM WORK	4
7	WORKPLACE CLOSURE/EARLY FINISH DECLARED	4
8	NON-AVAILABILITY OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT	4
9	EMPLOYEE STRANDED WHILE ON COUNCIL BUSINESS.....	5
10	INFORMATION SOURCES	5
11	LINKS TO OTHER POLICIES	6
12	CONCLUSION	6

APPENDIX 1 – WEATHER DRIVING IN SHETLAND

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Adverse weather conditions can sometimes make travel to or from work difficult or dangerous. This policy advises Line Managers and employees what procedures should be followed in the event of adverse weather conditions.

2 SCOPE OF POLICY

- 2.1 This policy applies to all employees of Shetland Islands Council apart from school-based teaching staff. (Separate guidelines exist for school based teaching staff)

3 EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITY

3.1 Employee Responsibility for Personal Safety

Employees have responsibility as individuals to consider their personal safety and whether a journey is practical. They are asked to pay attention to Council and Police warnings as well as weather forecasts and actual weather conditions before making a decision to travel. Several sources of information are available – see Section 10.

If they are unable to attend work, they must report this fact, and the reasons, to their Line Manager at the earliest opportunity. Guidelines on travelling to work by vehicle in adverse weather conditions are attached to this policy as an appendix.

Line Managers should not make the decision to travel on behalf of employees. It is for employees to make a final decision on whether it is safe to travel.

3.2 Employee Responsibility to Attend Work

Employees are expected to make all efforts to reach their usual place of work and continue with work as normally as possible provided they can do so safely without putting themselves and others at risk.

4 EMPLOYEE NON-ATTENDANCE AT WORK

- 4.1 Sometimes adverse weather conditions or transport difficulties can reasonably be anticipated. Employees must agree in advance to:

- Take annual leave; (Except term time staff)
- Work from home;
- Report to an alternative work location if possible; or
- Make up hours of work

4.2 Notification

It is the responsibility of employees to contact their Line Manager and let them know if and when they will be able to attend work, taking into

consideration any Police warnings and weather forecasts. On return to work, they must confirm to their Line Manager the reason for their absence.

4.3 Use of Annual Leave

Annual leave can be taken to cover a period of non-attendance, which must be approved in the usual way. If no annual leave remains in the leave year, then up to 5 days leave can be used from the next leave year. (This option does not apply to term time staff.)

4.4 Home Working

Should an employee be allowed to take work home, Line Managers must make sure they do so securely and with regard to confidentiality, having noted the content of the work involved.

4.5 Reporting to an Alternative Work Location

Reporting to an alternative workplace depends on the employee's duties and the arrangements required by the Service. Line Managers should consider what alternative work locations, if any, are available for use by their Service area during periods of adverse weather.

4.6 Hours of Work

Employees are expected to keep to normal hours of work during the period of adverse weather. If they fail to complete their normal hours of work during the period of adverse weather, they will be required to make up these hours within a reasonable timescale. This must be agreed with their Line Manager and would usually be expected to be within four weeks. During periods of extreme adverse weather Line Managers should consider extending this. If employees do not make up their lost hours within the agreed timescale then these lost hours maybe deducted from their pay. In exceptional circumstances, Executive Directors, through a recommendation from the Head of Service may exercise discretion by not requiring lost hours (in total or part) to be made up. H.R. will provide guidance on what level of discretion should apply.

4.7 Essential Members of Staff

If your attendance at work is considered essential, Mangers may have to consider arranging alternative accommodation or transport to and from their place of work.

5 EMPLOYEE REPORTING LATE FOR WORK

- 5.1 If employees attend work after their normal start time they must confirm to their Line Manager the reason for the late arrival. Where employees late arrival can be anticipated they should contact their Line Manager and let them know when they will be able to attend work, taking into consideration any Police warnings and weather forecasts. They will be required to make

up any lost hours within a reasonable timescale agreed with their Line Manager, which is usually within four weeks.

6 EMPLOYEE LEAVING EARLY FROM WORK

- 6.1 Line Managers should consider requests sympathetically and respect employee's genuine fears about travelling safely. Employees with children may need to leave early because of school closure. Line Managers and employees should actively seek information on deteriorating weather conditions if adverse weather is forecast.
- 6.2 Employees must always agree in advance with their Line Manager before leaving early. Again, they will be required to make up these hours within a reasonable timescale agreed with their Line Manager, which is usually within four weeks.

7 WORKPLACE CLOSURE/EARLY FINISH DECLARED

- 7.1 Authority to declare a place of work closed lies with the Chief Executive, and in respect of Schools with the Head of Schools. If an employees place of work has been declared closed or an early finish is declared, employees will be considered to have been available for duty and will be paid in line with this.
- 7.2 As it is sometimes the case that road conditions vary in different parts of Shetland, the Head of Schools has devolved to Head Teachers responsibility for closing their school. Where this happens the school will be closed to pupils only. Staff should attend work normally and where this is not possible they should follow the procedure outlined in Section 4 – Non-attendance at work.
- 7.3 Similarly, individual Senior Masters and Masters have devolved authority to decide whether or not a ferry crossing will be cancelled during adverse weather conditions. Where this happens, staff should attend work normally and where this is not possible they should follow the procedure outlined in Section 4 – Non-attendance at work.

8 NON-AVAILABILITY OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT

- 8.1 Employees' responsibility to report to work in the event of non-availability of public transport remains the same as in adverse weather conditions. Employees' should therefore follow the guidance set out in Section 4 – Non-attendance at work.
- 8.2 Employees should check public announcements or contact bus operators directly to find out if bus services are to continue as normal. Similarly, they should contact the Ferry Information Voice Bank to find out if ferry services are to continue as normal.

9 EMPLOYEE STRANDED WHILE ON COUNCIL BUSINESS

- 9.1 Employees, who become stranded while on Council business because of adverse weather or the non-availability of public transport, will be reimbursed any actual necessary expenditure incurred where subsistence allowances do not apply.

10 INFORMATION SOURCES

- 10.1 Recommended sources for information include:

- **Roads, Department of Infrastructure**
Telephone: 01595 744866
During Periods of heavy snow, Roads will endeavour to have staff available from 0700 to provide information about road conditions.
- **Roads, On-line Weather Centre**
Available through SIC Internet, updated hourly.
Only provides information on actual conditions (air and road surface temperatures, wind speed and direction) - not weather forecasts.
- **Ferry Information Voice Bank:**

Bluemull Sound Services	01595 743971
Bressay Service	01595 743974
Fair Isle Service	01595 743978
Foula Service	01595 743976
Papa Stour Service	01595 743977
Skerries Service	01595 743975
Whalsay Service	01595 743973
Yell Service	01595 743972
- **Radio Stations:**
Radio Scotland, 92-95 fm/810 mw
Radio Shetland, 92-95 fm/810 mw, 1730 - 1800, Mon-Fri
Radio Orkney, 92-95 fm/810 mw, 0730 - 0800 and 1245 - 1300, Mon – Fri
SIBC, 96.2fm, weather every half hour between 0600 – 0900 and every hour between 0900 and 1300.
- **Websites:**
www.northisles-weather.co.uk/
www.bbc.co.uk/weather/
www.metogov.uk/weather/europe/uk/nwscotland/
www.onlineweather.com

Please be aware that during extreme adverse weather, the Roads Service may e-mail 'All Council Staff' directly to provide information, for example, if snowplough convoys have been arranged for traffic leaving Lerwick. As weather conditions can change so quickly, the Roads Service cannot accept responsibility for road conditions actually encountered. Individual Services should pass on any relevant information to employees who do not have access to e-mail.

11 LINKS TO OTHER POLICIES

There are a number of existing Council policies and procedures, which have links to this policy. These are;

- Parental Leave and Time Off for Dependants Policy
- Flexible Working Policy

12 CONCLUSION

12.1 It is important that all employees and managers know what to do when there is disruption due to adverse weather.

12.2 Employees must make the final decision whether it is safe to travel and then take every precaution regarding their own safety.

WINTER DRIVING IN SHETLAND

What the Council Does During Winter:

1. Salting or gritting for ice and light snow conditions will start at 6am and continue until 6pm daily.
2. The order of priority for treatment will be main routes, bus and school bus routes and thereafter other routes.
3. Treatment on Sundays and Public Holidays is restricted to the main routes only.
4. No treatment is proposed for Christmas or New Year's days.

What Drivers Should Do:

1. Keep your vehicle fully serviced in good condition with sufficient fuel for your journey bearing in mind fuel consumption may be increased in adverse conditions. Consideration should be given to fitting winter tyres to vehicles likely to be used in winter conditions on secondary and minor roads or on any road outwith working hours.
2. Check your tyres regularly and keep washer bottles topped up with windscreen solution.
3. Clear windscreen and windows before starting any journey.
4. Remember:
 - Look out for ice. Black roads do not mean ice free roads. Winter can be very variable and it is easy to be caught out by sudden changes. Black ice can be a particular danger; it is not readily visible and can persist or recur even after the road surface has been treated with salt.
 - Dawn frosts also catch drivers unaware. At first light a clear sky will allow heat to radiate quickly from the road surface causing icy patches to form on wet or damp roads.
 - Slushy roads are slippery roads.

In Difficult Conditions:

1. Do not travel unless it is absolutely necessary.
2. If you must travel always let someone know of your destination and expected time of arrival.
3. Be prepared for winter conditions – wear or have with you warm and waterproof clothing and suitable footwear. Carry something to eat and drink and keep a shovel and a torch in your vehicle.
4. If you are caught in a snowdrift, don't leave the vehicle unless you are in sight of a suitable destination – let help come to you. Do not keep your engine running for warmth. as there is a danger of carbon monoxide entering your vehicle
5. If you must abandon your vehicle, try to leave it out of the path of snowploughs and advise the Police.
6. Drivers travelling in the evening, overnight or early morning or on Christmas Day or New Year's Day in winter conditions should exercise great care for their own safety and the safety of others, in the knowledge that salting, gritting or snow clearing operations are not normally carried out during those times.
7. If you must drive in difficult winter conditions and require a road condition report, telephone either Roads Service on (01595) 744866 or the Police on their non-emergency number - 101.