

# Adverse Weather Guidance



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# Document Control

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# Purpose

The purpose of this guidance is to provide health and safety information to Council employees regarding adverse or inclement weather conditions which could disrupt travel and the working day.

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## Scope

This guidance applies to all Derbyshire County Council employees, contractors working for the Council and volunteers using Council premises or sites.

This guidance has been produced as part of the Council's health and safety arrangements. Whilst recognising that some departments/services will have specialist requirements over and above this guidance which necessitate additional specialist arrangements, it sets out the minimum health and safety requirements required across all departments to ensure the Council can implement the stated aims of its Safety Policy and comply with its Statutory Requirements. All managers and employees should therefore make themselves familiar with the requirements of this guidance and ensure they are followed



# Introduction

The Council recognises that adverse weather conditions may occasionally make travel to and from work and working conditions difficult.

Within this guidance you will find information on how to stay protected and safe during adverse weather.

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# Roles and Responsibilities

## **Corporate Management Team (CMT)**

- Will ensure that sufficient resources are provided to ensure compliance with this guidance.

## **Departmental Senior Management Team (SMT)**

- Will ensure that sufficient resources are provided to ensure compliance with this document, tailored to the specific requirements of their department.

## **Head of Service (HoS)**

- Will ensure suitable and sufficient resources are provided to comply with the requirements of this document.
- Ensure that all managers of areas under their control have considered and implemented suitable risk assessments.
- Upon request, will provide local Union Safety Representatives with all information, including risk assessments.

## **Line Manager**

- Is responsible for ensuring their employees read, understand, and adhere to this guidance and related documents.
- Undertake any required risk assessments where a significant risk of incident may occur from adverse weather conditions.
- Ensure all employees (and others who may be affected) are made aware of and abide by the control measures identified in the risk assessment.
- Immediately implement measures to control any identified risks.
- For those employees unable to access this document electronically, print off a hard copy of this guidance and any relevant hyperlinks.



### **Employees**

- Have a responsibility to read through this guidance and abide by any relevant risk assessments implemented.
- Keep up to date with adverse weather conditions by visiting a weather service site such as the Met Office, National Highways or Derbyshire County Council website.

### **Non-employee/Volunteer**

- Non-employees have no specific duties, but the requirements of the Health and Safety at Work Act do apply, in the interests of health, safety and welfare.

### **Health, Safety and Wellbeing Function (HSW)**

- Will provide advice and assistance where necessary.
- Offer support, advice and guidance to managers carrying out risk assessments.
- Monitor the effectiveness of this guidance.

# Arrangements

## Definition

Adverse weather is where the weather conditions are unusual and are such that working conditions are affected, the health and safety risk normally associated with the work changes and employees are prevented from or have significant problems getting to and/or home from work.

Adverse weather conditions arise from a variety of weather extremes such as heavy snowfalls and drifting but may also include high winds, flooding or excessively hot weather. Bad weather may affect different localities within a geographical area with different degrees of severity.

There is no law for maximum working temperatures, however there is guidance issued by the Health & Safety Executive which looks at thermal comfort for both extremes of Adverse Weather.

## Heat (Sun Awareness)

Most of us welcome hot weather, but when it's too hot, there are health risks. During heatwaves, more people than usual get seriously ill or die. If hot weather hits during summer, make sure it does not harm you or anyone you know.

## Tips for Coping in Hot Weather

Keep out of the heat if you can. If you have to go outside, stay in the shade especially between 11am and 3pm, wear sunscreen, a hat and light clothes and avoid exercise or activity that makes you hotter.

Cool yourself down. Have cold food and drinks, ideally water, as staying hydrated is crucial, avoid alcohol, caffeine and hot drinks, and have a cool shower or put cool water on your skin or clothes.

Keep the living or working space cool. Close windows and blinds during the day and open them when the temperature outside has gone down. Electric fans can help if the temperature is below 35 degrees. Check the temperature of the rooms, especially where people at higher risk live and sleep.

For more information visit GOV.UK: [www.gov.uk/government/collections/hot-weather-and-health-guidance-and-advice](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/hot-weather-and-health-guidance-and-advice)

### **Watch out for signs of heat-related illness**

If you or someone else feels unwell with a high temperature during hot weather, it may be heat exhaustion or heatstroke - [www.nhs.uk/conditions/heat-exhaustion-heatstroke](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/heat-exhaustion-heatstroke)

### **Sunscreen and Sun Safety**

There is also well-established link between exposure to the sun and skin cancer. This is an issue that could affect everyone.

### **What are the hazards?**

Ultraviolet radiation can cause harm to the skin. This could be mild reddening, blistering or peeling. Long term damage could include premature ageing and developing skin cancer. Points to remember:

- UV rays are strongest at noon (11.00hrs – 15.00hrs).
- UV rays are strong when reflected off water.
- UV can filter through cloud.
- Skin cancer kills 2000 people in the UK each year.
- People with fair skin, fair/red hair and high numbers of moles have an increased risk of burning or developing skin cancer.
- Individuals who develop skin cancer do not always have a history of deliberate sunbathing.
- Some chemicals can make your skin more sensitive to sunlight.
- A suntan indicates that the skin has already been damaged.

## Sun Safety Tips

- Wear clothes that cover the whole body (trousers, long sleeved top), a wide brimmed hat and sunglasses that provide sun protection
- Use sun block (follow instructions)
- Stay in the shade where possible
- Watch or listen out for the UV radiation index on TV or radio.
- Monitor moles on your skin for changes. If they change shape, increase in size, change colour, become red/inflamed, bleed or become crusty, itch or become painful, then show your Doctor or Practice Nurse.
- Protect vulnerable areas of the body, like the back of the neck and head.
- Drink plenty of water to avoid dehydration.

## Get to know your skin

### Do you know the A to E Rule?

The **ABCDE Rule** of skin cancer is an easy-to-remember system for determining whether a mole or growth may be cancerous.

Be aware of how your skin normally looks – that way, you'll notice changes that could be signs of skin cancer. When a Doctor performs a skin check, they look at every lump, spot and mole on your entire body; areas of concern are assessed for signs of skin cancer using the **ABCDE** method of melanoma detection.

- <https://www.melanomauk.org.uk/the-abcde-rule>
- <https://www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/cancer/cancer-types-in-adults/skin-cancer-melanoma#symptoms-of-melanoma>

Remember to check your neck and back too if they've been exposed – in men, this is where melanoma is most likely to occur. Use a mirror or get someone else to help you check.

Get any skin problem checked by your GP. There may be nothing to worry about, but if something is wrong, treating it early could stop it getting worse – and even save your life.

## **Icy Conditions and Winter Weather**

### **Ice, Frost and Snow**

- To reduce the risk of injuries on ice, frost or snow, you need to assess the risk and put in a system to manage it.
- Identify the outdoor areas used by pedestrians most likely to be affected by ice, for example: building entrances, car parks, pedestrian walkways, shortcuts, sloped areas and areas constantly in the shade or wet.
- Monitor the temperature, as prevention is key.
- You need to take action whenever freezing temperatures are forecast. Keep up to date by visiting a weather service site such as the Met office - [www.metoffice.gov.uk](http://www.metoffice.gov.uk) or the Derbyshire County Council website - [www.derbyshire.gov.uk/transport-roads/roads-traffic/road-maintenance/snow-info/latest-update/latest-snow-update.aspx](http://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/transport-roads/roads-traffic/road-maintenance/snow-info/latest-update/latest-snow-update.aspx)
- There are also smart signs available through reputable suppliers which display warning messages for low temperatures.
- Put a procedure in place to prevent an icy surface forming and/or keep pedestrians off the slippery surface;
  - Have a gritting plan
  - Use grit or similar, on areas prone to be slippery in frosty, icy conditions;
  - Ensure key routes are gritted, this may mean prioritising a smaller number of routes to and from buildings than normal
  - Divert pedestrians to the gritted routes, barrier off and sign routes that haven't been gritted.
- If warning cones are used, remember to remove them once the hazard has passed or they will eventually be ignored.
- If your role involves walking outside in snowy/icy conditions appropriate footwear with suitable grips should be worn or ice/snow cleats utilised.

## How to Clear Snow

- Work within your own capabilities
- Warm up muscles before doing any heavy work
- Wear layers of clothing
- Ensure all safety equipment is worn/used
- Clear snow and ice from the footway only
- Use a snow shovel that fits you – it should be a comfortable height and head width. It should not be too heavy.
- As you lift the snow shovel, hold it as close to your upper body as possible
- Keep a reasonable amount of space between your hands in order to increase lifting leverage
- Use your legs muscles as much as possible – push snow when you can
- Don't try to get all the way down to the bottom of deep snow all at once – try to scoop a few small loads instead big ones
- Don't twist your upper body as you throw snow
- Don't move snow twice
- Move snow the shortest distance possible
- Once the snow/ice has been removed apply salt/grit

## Grit Spreading Demo

- [Grit spreading demonstration](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GLBoS0-Fbno) - [www.youtube.com/watch?v=GLBoS0-Fbno](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GLBoS0-Fbno)

## Winter driving

Be aware that 'dawn frost' can occur on dry surfaces when early morning dew forms and freezes on impact with the cold surface. It can be difficult to predict when or where this condition will occur.

Be extra cautious of pedestrians walking on roads who are unable to walk at their normal pace. This is especially dangerous in heavy snow where it is difficult to see where the pavement edge is.

As a general rule, avoid sharp acceleration and braking in snow, ice and extreme rain. Drive to the conditions and reduce your speed.

Always check the weather forecast prior to any journey if there is a likelihood of snow/ice and only make journey's that are necessary.

### **Information for driving a 4x4 vehicle in Ice and Snow**

[E17 Driving a 4X4 vehicle in ice and snow](#)

[E18 Driving a 4X4 vehicle through water](#)

### **Severe Weather Conditions**

In severe weather, consider if your journey is essential. Ensure you have full visibility and clear all snow and ice from the vehicle. Prepare for your journey and consider having these items in your vehicle:

- Tow rope
- A shovel/snow shovel
- Wellington boots
- A hazard warning triangle
- High visibility vest
- De-icing equipment
- First aid kit (in good order)
- Torch
- Blanket
- Warm clothes
- Emergency Rations (including hot drink in a flask)
- Mobile Phone (fully charged)

### **Vehicle safety**

In winter it is even more important to ensure your car or vehicle is safe and in good condition.

- To ensure vehicle safety, check the following items more frequently:

- Washer bottle fluid level and concentrated washer solution. Don't use water as this will freeze on the windscreen during extreme cold
- Cooling water and oil Levels
- All lights including fog lights all fully working
- Wiper blades - these should be working and in good condition with no visible damage
- Tyres - these should be in good condition with good treads and pressures set correctly
- All windows should be fully clear of ice and snow as well as mirrors.
- Any snow that is on the car that may come off in transit (especially braking) should be removed. It can be classed as an unsecured load and could directly affect other road users (including pedestrians) and visibility of the driver should it fall onto the windscreen

**If you get caught in a snow drift:**

- Don't leave your vehicle (your vehicle is a source of shelter for you)
- Call your breakdown service or the emergency services and let help come to you.
- Don't run the engine to keep warm (it strips oil from critical engine parts and if the exhaust is blocked with snow, carbon monoxide can build up in the interior of the vehicle. If you do need to run the engine for any reason, open a window).

**General Winter Precautions for Establishments When Not Closing or Who Cannot Close.**

There is a statutory duty under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 to ensure safe access and egress routes to, from and around the premises for all users of the establishment. The following precautions (or a combination of some of them as appropriate to your circumstances) will help you to meet this duty.

- Ensure you have a suitable supply of grit/salt on the premises to deal with the areas you need to grit during icy/snowy weather. Store the grit/salt in a



suitable storage facility and as close as you can to the area where it is to be used.

- Ensure you have a gritting plan and suitable [risk assessment](#) detailing which areas are to be cleared/gritted based on the risk of people slipping/falling. This will need to pay particular attention to areas at most risk.
- At least one designated access/egress route should be gritted (and re-gritted throughout the day as necessary). The timing of the gritting should be considered as gritting will need to take place before people arrive and in time for it to work but not re freeze. Where temperatures remain at or below freezing throughout the day, those routes which have been gritted will need to be checked periodically and especially before times of regular usage and re-gritted as necessary.
- Ensure that fire exit and evacuation routes are kept free of snow and ice.
- If possible, ensure that all users of the establishment (including members of the public and visitors) are made aware of which the designated gritted/cleared routes are. For regular visitors this could be by letter and newsletters. You should however also take measures to prevent anyone using non-gritted routes, this could be by using signs or barriers and/or by locking gates to those routes.
- Ensure you have people designated to carry out the gritting/clearing and that they have appropriate equipment; personal protective equipment, boots, gloves, coats etc, training and sufficient time to carry this out. They should be fully familiar with all the risk assessments relevant to this work and be given suitable instruction on how to carry out the work, including use of equipment.
- Ensure there is a system in place for persons working outside gritting and clearing snow and ice to report that they are back safely.
- A manual handling assessment will need to be carried out for the gritting operation.
- Car parking areas should be gritted. The level of gritting will depend on the size, shape and layout including steepness of the car park. For example, a sloping car park may need to be fully gritted, a flat car park may only require the access routes (not individual bays) gritted. This will be a decision for individual establishments to make.

- If, for logistical reasons it is decided car parks cannot be gritted then they should be closed until such time as they can be gritted or can be made safe, and access to the car park should be prevented by barriers, signs or if possible, locking the gates to the car park.
- Access to other areas which have not been gritted/cleared should be restricted
- Employees should be advised to wear appropriate footwear during icy/snowy conditions.
- Establishments may wish to consider delaying openings times until routes have been gritted / cleared

Employees routinely required to work outside during periods of adverse weather should be provided with appropriate personal protective equipment to keep them dry and warm. They should also be provided with suitable footwear to minimise the risk of slipping in snowy/icy conditions, this could also be achieved by the provision of non-slip/ice cleats that employees can fit over their own footwear when appropriate.

## **High Winds**

### **Establishment and Equipment Checks**

- Ensure you have a risk assessment detailing control measures if high winds have been forecast, equipment outside is secured and then after the high winds have died down, checked for damage.
- Check for building damage, trees blown or blowing over, debris
- Ensure fire evacuation routes are free from debris
- Close off car parking spaces where there could be a risk of falling tree branches
- If necessary, cancel events during high winds which might cause injury or damage (bouncy castles etc).

### **Driving in High Winds**

- Only drive if you feel safe to do so.

- Drive slowly to minimise the impact of wind gusts
- Only make journeys that are absolutely necessary where high winds are forecast and try to avoid areas with tree lined roads.
- Be aware of high sided vehicles/caravans on more exposed roads
- Be cautious when overtaking high sided vehicles/caravans
- Make sure you hold the steering wheel firmly.
- Slow down and keep focused on the road ahead – watch out for fallen trees, branches or other items blown by winds.
- Driver training is available on DLO and is suitable for managers, or employees who drive for their work. The module gives an overview of the different types of drivers, occupational road risk responsibilities, assessing the risks and possible control measures to reduce the risk. Also on DLO is a course for all those who will be involved with driving and operating winter service vehicles over 7.5 tonnes

### **Working in High Winds**

- Ensure there is a risk assessment in place detailing the control measures for working in high winds.
- Ensure that tools and other kit are stable and secure
- Ensure that debris is not blowing around that may cause harm to anyone in the general area
- Do not work on ladders or on exposed areas e.g., roofing, gutters etc

### **Walking in High Winds**

- Stay indoors as much as possible. If you do go out, try not to walk or shelter close to buildings or trees.
- Stand clear of roadways (a gust of wind may blow you into the path of an oncoming vehicle)
- Use handrails wherever possible

### **Driving in Thawing Conditions, Torrential Rain and Flooding**

- Plan your route to avoid floodwaters or areas prone to flooding. It is never safe to drive or walk through floodwaters. Drivers and pedestrians can easily

become trapped by rising flood waters. If you are not sure about the depth of water on a route do not attempt to drive or walk through it.

- Avoiding contact with flood water due to pollution and contamination.
- It only takes six inches of water for a driver to lose control of a small vehicle. This level of water can cause damage to the vehicle or stop the vehicle running which can leave you stranded.
- Hitting standing water can cause aquaplaning which can cause you to lose control of your vehicle. Aquaplaning is caused when a layer of water is allowed to build up between a vehicle's tyres and the surface of the road beneath.
- In wet weather, stopping distances will be at least double those required for stopping on dry roads. This is because your tyres have less grip on the road. In wet weather, you should keep well back from the vehicle in front – this will increase your ability to see and plan ahead.
- Potholes or manholes can be hidden under water on the surface causing further damage to the vehicle.
- Try to be aware of other road users going through flood water and standing water and the impact it could have on you and your car.
- If possible, get to higher ground if you are in area that is subject to flooding.

During any such weather, you should monitor the local forecasts and consider the expected conditions in order to plan and prepare.

### Where to sign up for alerts

- [Weather-health alerting system - user guide \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/644441/Weather-health_alerting_system_-_user_guide.pdf) heat and cold, developed in collaboration with the Met Office. Those supporting vulnerable clients can sign up to receive the new Heat-Health alerts by registering at the following link: [forms.office.com/e/Bw6mjea6qa](https://forms.office.com/e/Bw6mjea6qa)
- You can sign up to weather warnings via the Met Office website [www.metoffice.gov.uk/weather/warnings-and-advice/uk-warnings](https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/weather/warnings-and-advice/uk-warnings)
- You can sign up for flooding alerts via Gov.UK [www.gov.uk/sign-up-for-flood-warnings](https://www.gov.uk/sign-up-for-flood-warnings)
- Derbyshire County Council - [www.derbyshire.gov.uk/transport-roads/roads-traffic/road-maintenance/snow-info/latest-update/latest-snow-update.aspx](https://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/transport-roads/roads-traffic/road-maintenance/snow-info/latest-update/latest-snow-update.aspx)