

MAESTEG TOWN COUNCIL

Adverse Weather Policy

General Statement

During periods of adverse weather, Maesteg Town Council aims to continue to deliver services and keep offices open, where possible, to safely maintain and support the community.

Employees have a responsibility to report for work. In the event of adverse weather, all employees are expected to make every effort to report for work, including attempting to travel by alternative means than those used in normal weather conditions.

Adverse weather can impact on working conditions, especially where employees are required to travel at work. In such circumstances, appropriate measures require to be implemented to manage any increased risk to employees.

It is also recognised that there may be occasions where employees are prevented from attending their workplace or prevented from returning home as a consequence of the weather conditions.

This policy is intended to assist managers in implementing a sensible and caring approach to individual employee circumstances whilst balancing this against the need to maintain the provision of services.

Adverse weather: Definition

Adverse weather is defined as weather conditions which:

- have unusual consequences which affect working conditions
- prevent staff getting to work
- cause significant problems for staff getting to and from work
- This can include snow, ice, fog, floods or high winds which render travel extremely hazardous. 'Extremely hazardous' is defined as conditions in which the Police and/or appropriate motoring organisations advise the public not to make unnecessary journeys or not to travel at all unless necessary.

Weather alerts

Managers are expected to monitor and respond to different alert levels as follows:

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. Managers are required to monitor the latest forecast and be aware that the weather may change leading to disruption of plans in the following hours/days.

Amber warning

There is an increased likelihood of impacts from severe weather, with the possibility of travel delays, road and rail closures, power cuts and the potential risk to life and property. Each Service must review working arrangements in light of deteriorating weather conditions. Alternative arrangements may require to be put in place to manage any increased risk to employees

Red warning

Dangerous weather is expected. 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.

Risk Assessments

Local conditions may not reflect the weather warning conditions therefore it is important to take account of known variables in weather e.g. high ground with potential for snow or areas that are known to have flooding issues. As these are variable conditions, Risk Assessments should be reviewed to reflect the conditions. The outcome of these assessments should be retained and be available to be viewed by employees. Relevant information should be passed on to all members of the team.

Staff attendance during adverse weather

Each individual employee is responsible for their own attendance at work. In adverse weather, all employees are expected to make every effort to report for work. This includes attempting to travel to work by other means or to make use of the Council's flexible working options where relevant to their role.

Where adverse weather is predicted, employees should make reasonable preparations including:

- Allowing for additional travel time
- Planning alternative routes

If the nature of the employee's work allows them to work from home and it is considered appropriate for them to undertake this work and employees should ensure that they take sufficient and appropriate work home in case they are prevented from attending work.

Unable to report for work

Where it is unsafe or unreasonable for an employee to travel to their normal workplace/an alternative work location or to homework, they must contact their line manager by telephone as early as possible on the day in question and on a daily basis if the weather conditions persist thereafter. They must advise their line manager of their non-attendance and the reasons preventing their travel. Employees should review their position as the day progresses and report for work if travel arrangements improve over the course of the working day.

Managers should satisfy themselves as to the legitimacy of the reasons for non-attendance. Such consideration could include;

- Monitoring any announcements made by SW Police about the condition of roads and their suitability for travel purposes
- Whether the employee has any special requirements which may impact on their ability to report for work and for which, reasonable adjustment is required

Where satisfied that an employee's reasons for not attending their workplace are legitimate, the line manager should give consideration to:

- The nature of the work undertaken
- Whether it is appropriate for the employee to work from home if they don't normally do so and if so, ensure that sufficient work can be allocated
- Whether alternative working patterns may be appropriate in the short term e.g. for the employee to work compressed hours over the course of the working week

- Where none of the above applies, the line manager should discuss and agree the use of annual leave, flexi leave or unpaid leave with any employee unable to report for work.
- Alternatively, where work is available, employees can work additional hours to make up lost time.
- If adverse weather occurs towards the end of an annual leave year, employees may be permitted to use annual leave from the following year's entitlement and also excess flexi leave.

Homeworking

Where employees are able to home work, they must still contact their line manager by telephone as early as possible on any day that they are prevented from attending work.

Employees must make contact on a daily basis if the weather conditions persist.

Where weather deteriorates during the working day/shift

Where weather deteriorates over the course of the working day, Managers have discretion to send employees home where there is clear evidence that individuals will encounter significant difficulty in reaching their home at reasonable times

The discretion exercised by Managers in this context means that some employees may be allowed home earlier than those who are unlikely to encounter difficulties. All such situations should be managed with care taking into account the circumstances of the individuals concerned.

Caring for dependents

Where schools are closed at short notice due to adverse weather or there are other increased demands placed on employees with carer's responsibilities for dependents, consideration should be given to carer's leave in line with the Council's Family Leave Policy. Carer's leave is intended to deal with emergency and unforeseen situations and to allow time to make alternative arrangements. Managers are required to assess each case individually, on each day that adverse weather continues, in line with the Family Leave Policy.

Carers should consider on-going weather forecasts and make advance arrangements where possible.

Responsibility

Clerk is responsible for the implementation of this policy.

This policy was reviewed by the Policy committee on 28/02/2023

Policy Accepted and adopted by a Hybrid meeting of the Council held on 07/03/2023

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Mayor

Review Date: To be reviewed during the year following an election unless any issues arise.