



**Muirhouse
Housing
Association**

MUIRHOUSE HOUSING ASSOCIATION

Title of Policy: Adverse Weather

Date of Adoption or Last Review: 11 September 2019

Lead Officer: Grit Nielsen, Corporate Services Team Leader

Date of Next Review: September 2022

Policy: Adverse Weather

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Employers have a responsibility under the Health & Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 to ensure, so far as reasonably practicable, the health and safety of all employees while at work. However, employers also can be held vicariously liable if an employee injures a third party whilst working.
- 1.2 Adverse weather can bring additional, and sometimes unexpected, risks to both employees and others who may be affected by employees' work or occupational driving. It is important that any such events are properly addressed and adequately risk assessed on a dynamic basis.

2. Purpose

- 2.1 To ensure that the Health and Safety of staff during adverse weather conditions is properly addressed in terms of increased and/or additional risk.

3. Scope

- 3.1 This policy covers all employees of Muirhouse Housing Association, whether in permanent roles or on fixed term contracts. This policy is also applicable to employees during their probation period.

4. Definitions & References

- 4.1 Reference: Health & Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- 4.2 Reference: Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999, as amended
- 4.3 For the purposes of this policy, 'adverse weather' is taken to be any 'extreme weather conditions' which include: snow, ice, wind, flood, excessive heat, thunder and lightning etc.
- 4.4 The Met Office issues warnings to warn the public and emergency services of impending severe and hazardous weather and such warnings will be heeded by MHA in undertaking any risk assessments associated with the weather. These warnings are colour-coded depending on the likely severity of the weather. The Met Office describes the codes as follows:

Yellow: When it is likely the weather will have a low level effect on day to day life including some disruption to travel in a few places.

Amber: There is an increased likelihood of effect from severe weather, which could potentially disrupt travel plans and day to day life. There is the possibility of travel delays, road and rail closures, power cuts and the potential risk to life and property.

Red: Dangerous weather is expected, and people should take action to keep themselves and others safe from the effect of the severe weather. It is very likely there will be risk to life and property, with substantial disruption to travel and energy supplies. People should avoid travelling unless absolutely necessary and follow the advice of the emergency services and local authorities.

5.1 Risk Assessments

- 5.1 As soon as is reasonably practicable ahead of any impending adverse weather event, the relevant risk assessments (e.g. lone working, occupational driving, NEMs etc.) will be reviewed and where appropriate, additional assessments carried out to take account of the specific weather conditions.
- 5.2 Whilst each situation will be appraised on its own merits, in most cases the additional risk assessing process will be one of 'dynamic risk assessing' – that is, additional assessments will be carried out and reviewed as the situation develops. Where practicable, employees likely to be affected by adverse weather will be involved in the risk assessing process.

6. Monitoring Procedures

- 6.1 We will monitor weather warnings issued by the Met Office and will circulate relevant information from the Met Office, local authorities and police to all employees.
- 6.2 Employees must follow any advice and instructions issued by MHA to protect their health, safety and wellbeing

7. Travelling During Adverse Weather

- 7.1 MHA will ensure that occupational driving risk assessments consider driving in adverse weather conditions.
- 7.2 All occupational driving will be suspended during a red weather warning and an assessment will be made during an amber weather warning on the safety of drivers. This will be documented in the risk assessments carried out.

- 7.3 Employees will be encouraged not to put themselves at unnecessary risk when attempting to attend work during adverse weather conditions with each individual employees' personal circumstances, location, access to transport etc. being taken into consideration
- 7.4 Where an employee experiences substantial difficulty in attending work due to adverse weather conditions, they should notify their Line Manager without delay and following the absence procedure, to discuss alternative working arrangements. The Line Manager will then take any such action as is deemed appropriate in line with organisational policy.
- 7.5 Where possible, external meetings or visits will be re-arranged or carried out via video conferencing during adverse weather conditions.
- 7.6 In the event of adverse weather conditions it is ultimately the Chief Executive's responsibility to instruct the employees in the best course of action and to ensure their safety. All employees must follow the instructions provided from the Chief Executive during adverse weather. The Chief Executive may consult with key employees regarding local weather situations.

8. Business Continuity Plan

- 8.1 In the event of adverse weather conditions (including excess heat) which could affect the health, safety and wellbeing of employees, MHA will implement the business continuity plan insofar as it deals with adverse weather. This may include homeworking on a temporary basis or, in extreme cases, paid/unpaid leave, TOIL, flexi time or annual leave being taken in line with organisational policy.

9. Policy Review

- 9.1 This policy will be reviewed every three years or earlier if required.