



Severe Weather Guide

Advice for Managers and Business Continuity



Introduction

This '*Severe Weather Guide - Advice for Managers and Business Continuity*' is aimed at providing managers and persons with business continuity responsibilities in either local authorities or provider services with the essential information on dealing with severe weather. The aim is to help you keep yourself and others safe and reduce service disruption.

If you are neither a manager nor responsible for business continuity but would like advice on preparing for and coping with severe weather, please see the: ***Severe Weather Guidance – Advice for All***

This guide is not a substitute for a service level business continuity plan. Instead it is designed to supplement your business continuity planning and help you increase the resiliency of your service to severe weather hazards.

An expanded section on '*Delivering your Service in snow*' is included from pages 10 – 15.

For information on your employer's expectations on you performing your role during severe weather, please see / request your Human Resource's Severe Weather / Inclement Weather Policy.

Stay Informed

Check the weather

We recommend checking the forecasts daily, and more frequently when severe weather is forecast.

Download the [Met Office Weather App](#) on your phone

Get Met Office Severe Weather Warnings

You can automatically get Severe Weather Warnings for your saved locations (e.g. home, work) on the [Met Office Weather App](#).

Alternatively you can receive them [via email](#) (this method is recommended for the receipt of local authority wide Warnings).



Warnings tell you what the risks are, and what you and others can do to stay safe.

Consider encouraging your staff to sign-up for Warnings via the App.

Know your site's flood risk

[Find out](#) if the properties / sites you operate from are at flood risk and [sign-up](#) for warnings for them.

If you need to receive Flood Warnings across a local authority wide area, contact the [CSW Resilience Team](#).

Have methods to communicate severe weather risks

Ensure you have effective ways to communicate weather related risks, both to your own staff and to clients.

This could be done across a whole organisation (e.g. through a communications team). It can also be done at service / team level. This could involve emails, WhatsApp groups, phone calls, teleconference, SMS messages or other methods. It should be used to:

- Keep your staff informed of the weather risks and make them aware of any key advice and guidance, both generic and role specific.
- Ensure clients, especially more vulnerable clients are aware of the weather risks and what actions they can take to mitigate them.

You could also encourage members of your team to sign-up for Met Office Severe Weather Warnings either via App or email so they are informed that way.

Be Prepared

Service Business Continuity Plan (BCP)

Having a service Business Continuity Plan (BCP) is critical to mitigating the risks associated with service disruption, whatever the cause, including severe weather.

Please ensure:

- Your service BCP is up-to-date and all the contacts in it are accurate.
- The BCP is accessible via different means (e.g. electronically on hard drive and cloud, and hardcopy).
- For redundancy purposes multiple people should be familiar with the plan, and know how to access and activate it.

Business continuity primarily focuses on managing the consequences of a disruption rather than the specific cause. This is because most of the potential consequences associated with severe weather could also be caused by other hazards. You should have appropriate arrangements in place to mitigate the following consequences:

- Disruption to travel / transport infrastructure
- Staff shortages
- Increased service demand / pressures
- Limited ability to deliver service in the community. This impact may be localised or widespread
- Utilities failure
- Communications system failure
- Site closure / loss of site
- Logistical / supply chain disruption

- Are your IT systems able to support large numbers of staff working remotely?

However, business continuity also should include being prepared for some of the risks associated more specifically with severe weather:

- **Flooding** - If your site is at flood risk, what measures have been taken to mitigate the risk? Options include:
 - Exploring resilience and resistance options for property flood protection. See the [National Flood Forum](#) and [Blue Pages](#) for more information.
 - Having a stock of sandbags and sand, or similar products on site that can be used to protect ingress points.
 - As a last resort and if flooding is imminent, consider improvising sandbags using bin-liners filled with soil, and use other materials (e.g. tarpaulin, duck-tape, towels) to limit the amount of water ingress (effectiveness of this method may vary).
- **Snow** - Snow can significantly disrupt the delivery of services across a wide area. There are a range of options services and organisations can explore to make their critical service delivery more resilient. See pages 10-12.

Know who to contact

You should know who to contact in your organisation or externally in the event of any of the following:

- Repairing property damage, clear-up on site
- Managing a loss of utilities (water, electricity, gas, heating)
- Managing loss of access to IT or telecommunications services
- Protecting the property from flooding

Speak to a senior manager if unsure.

Keep Safe During:

This key advice is to follow and share:



Flooding

- Drive with caution, park away from areas at risk of flooding
- Avoid going into flood water
- Turn off gas, water and electricity if at risk of flooding
- Move valuable items upstairs or to safety
- Determine how best to protect yourself and others, either:
 - A. Evacuate if you are told to and can safely do so
 - B. Move to higher ground or a higher floor
 - C. Stay where you are

Wind

- Secure loose objects beforehand
- Stay indoors during high winds as much as possible
- Drive with caution and avoid parking under potential hazards

Snow and Ice

- Dress appropriately with multiple layers, hat, gloves, scarf and footwear that provide a good grip
- Consider getting a pair of Ice grips to go under the soles of your footwear for extra grip
- For more information on driving and delivering your service during snow and icy conditions see pages 10 - 15

Lightning / Thunderstorms

- Get indoors and stay indoors
- If indoors are not an option stay in your vehicle

- Stay away from trees and open / exposed places

Extreme Temperatures

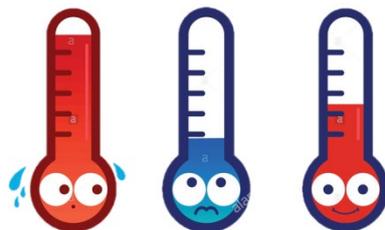
- During heatwaves, try to keep room temperatures below 26°C.
- During cold weather, keep room temperatures above 18°C.
- Encourage staff to get their [free flu jab](#) if they're eligible
- Look out for family, friends and neighbours, especially persons who are older, younger or have health conditions.

Key Advice on how to cope in heatwaves/cold weather can be found on the NHS Website:

- [NHS Advice on how to cope in Heatwaves](#)
- [NHS Advice on how to cope in Cold Weather](#)

Action Cards have been created for specific services to instruct managers what to do during a Heatwave / Cold Weather. These can be found in your local authority's Cold Weather / Heatwave Plan.

	Heatwave Plan	Cold Weather Plan
Coventry		Click Here
Solihull		Click here
Warwickshire		Click here



Escalating

- **If there is a risk to life always phone 999**
- If there is a risk of flooding or damage to corporate property notify the relevant team/persons (Likely to be your facilities / property services team)
- If there is a significant risk to client welfare contact the CSW Resilience Team using the Emergency Duty Number and ask to speak to the Emergency Planning Duty Officer.



Further Key Information

Met Office

Current UK Weather Warnings	Met Office Advice
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Cold Weather and Heatwave Alerts

If you work in social care speak to your manager about receiving cascaded Met Office Heatwave / Cold Weather Alerts. Alternatively contact the [CSW Resilience Team](#).

The current [Heat-health](#) and [Cold Weather](#) Alert Level

The [Heatwave Plan](#) and [Cold Weather Plan](#) and guidance for England

Flooding

Current Flood Warnings	How to report a flood	What to do after a flood
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Power Failure

Ring **105** for help and advice in a power cut. [Click here](#) more information on power cuts in your area

Water Supply Issue

In an emergency, call Severn Trent Water on **0800 783 4444**. [Click here](#) more information on water supply issues in your area

Delivering your Service in snow

This short guide has been developed to help managers and those responsible for business continuity increase the resilience of their service / organisation to snow conditions.

CSW Resilience have limited contingency arrangements in place however the primary responsibility rests with services and organisations as part of business continuity to have their own arrangements too.

At all times individuals are responsible for judging the conditions themselves and undertaking a dynamic risk assessment.

Developing resilience to snow – the options

There are a wide range of options that can significantly improve the potential for services to deliver the critical elements of their service in snow conditions:

A - Provide staff with key advice

A separate guide has been created aimed at frontline staff, it includes key guidance on managing in snow conditions: [\(Click here\)](#)

B - Staff training

A range of training options provided by external companies are available for services to consider sending their staff on. These courses can increase the confidence of staff and teach them key techniques for driving in snow. Contact cswrt@warwickshire.gov.uk for more information about training options.

C - Providing vehicle snow socks

Vehicle snow socks are fitted around a car's powered wheels and help provide grip on snow covered surfaces. They are simpler and quicker to fit than chains and are ideal for helping drivers get out of tricky spots, such as their drives, cul-de-sacs or side roads; enabling them to reach cleared and maintained roads where they should be removed. (Use as per instructions).

Snow socks are recommended by local volunteer groups MROC and St. John Ambulance.



D - Providing PPE

Shoe snow grips fit around the soles of shoe and significantly increase grip in snow and icy conditions. It should give staff greater confidence to walk cul-de-sacs / side roads to use public transport, taxis and to get reach clients/work.



E - Identify existing service staff that can support the service

Services should attempt to identify staff within their own service area that have business insurance on their cars policy and have any of the following:

- A 4x4

- Vehicle snow socks / snow chains
- Winter tyres or snow certified All-weather tyres

These staff could be asked if they'd consider supporting colleagues to deliver critical service in the event of snow conditions (encourage them to contact their insurer prior to committing).

F - Incentivise frontline staff to switch to snow certified all weather tyres

Consider setting up a partial sponsorship scheme to encourage staff whose tyres need replacing to opt for all-weather/season ones that are snow certified.

G - Leasing / Hiring 4x4s

Very rarely are conditions in the West Midlands so bad only 4x4s can get through. Having appropriate tyres (winter / snow certified all-season) or tools (snow socks / chains) enables drivers to achieve significant improvement in snow over standard tyre equipped cars. However, 4x4s can provide a high level of capability in the most challenging circumstances.

Speak to your facilities / corporate fleet manager to understand what your options are.

H - Establish links with a 4x4 volunteer group

A number of 4x4 volunteer groups exist across the region. Groups typically have experienced drivers and vehicles optimised to tackle the challenging conditions.

It is recommended having a relationship with a volunteer 4x4 group should augment, rather than substitute internal measures if mobility in snow is critical, as availability can vary.

Have a clear escalation structure

In the event a critical service element is undeliverable, ensure a clear escalation structure is in place so all internal arrangements and options are exhausted before seeking wider support.

Senior management in the service / directorate should be responsible for notifying the CSW Duty Officer to ensure all possible options have been exhausted first at service level prior to escalating.

Local Authority commissioned services should notify their local authority commissioning contact in-hours to report issues. Only notify the CSW Emergency Planning Duty Officer out-of-hours in the event of risk to client welfare when all other options have been exhausted.

Preparing for winter and snow

Encourage frontline staff to download the [Met Office App](#) on their phone. This will help keep them informed if snow is likely.

When snow conditions are forecast consider emailing staff to remind them of the following:

“When snow is forecast:

- *Try and avoid leaving your car at the bottom of a steep drive or hill and park on a flat area if possible*
- *Consider parking your car closer to the main road*
- *Keep a good reserve of fuel in your cars tank in case you need to make any unexpected detours / delays*

Before you set off

- *Plan your route, often side roads and cul-de-sacs are the worst affected whilst main roads are typically ploughed and gritted.*
- *Councils make their gritting routes available online, use these to help you plan your journeys:*
 - [Coventry](#)
 - [Solihull](#)
 - [Warwickshire](#)
- *Allow yourself extra time, both to get your car ready and to compensate for any delays or detours*
- *Ensure you can see clearly out of all your car windows (it is a legal requirement) and clear snow off your car roof.”*

When a frontline staff member requests support

Alternative ways to travel

Even if a staff member is unable to drive, often taxis and public transport are able to continue operating. Encourage them to consider using public transport / taxis and walking appropriate distances (with suitable footwear and clothing).

Alternative ways to deliver the service

If a member of staff feels they have exhausted their options, consider the following:

- Can the service be delivered another way (e.g. telephone check-up)
- Can visits / tasks be prioritised and rescheduled where possible

- Are alternative members of staff or other appropriate persons better placed to help

Escalating

If all the options above have been exhausted and there are potentially issues to client welfare, escalate to senior management in the service who should contact the CSW Resilience Team via the Duty number.

CSW Resilience Team maintains contingency arrangements including links with a local 4x4 volunteer group. However, resource availability is limited and cannot be guaranteed.

The primary responsibility rests with services and organisations as part of their business continuity planning to have their own arrangements too.

If there is a risk to life contact the emergency services on 999.

If you have any questions or would like further information, please contact the CSW Resilience Team at cswrt@warwickshire.gov.uk