

# Severe Weather Policy

1.2

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## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1. This policy has been put in place by SHPCA to deal with situations involving severe weather, for example, very heavy snow or flooding. This policy applies to both SHPCA direct employees and staff working in any SHPCA services (e.g. GP Extended Access, urgent care centre etc).
- 1.2. Whilst severe weather is still unusual within the United Kingdom, there are occasions when employees may face difficulties in attending at the office/clinical service site, or returning home after completing their work.
- 1.3. Whilst recognising these difficulties, SHPCA sets out that, given the particular service it is required to provide to patients, and the increased importance of medical services during periods of severe weather, employees or staff working within SHPCA provided services remain under an obligation to attend work and ensure that, as far as possible, any disruption to SHPCA is reduced to a minimum.
- 1.4. All staff must make every effort to attend work, and this includes during periods of severe weather. Whilst you should not unnecessarily risk your health and safety in attending the office in severe weather conditions, you are required to attend work in all but the most exceptional circumstances, and you should use your very best endeavours to do so.
- 1.5. This document should be read alongside the other Service specific Process and Policy documents depending on the service you work in.

## **2. What is Severe Weather?**

- 2.1. It will be SHPCA's responsibility to determine whether severe weather conditions apply, and this decision will normally be made having reviewed weather forecasts and various other information services.

## **3. Who should staff contact?**

- 3.1. As with any type of absence, staff who are delayed by severe weather conditions, or who are unable to attend work due to such conditions should immediately contact their Line Manager or the service management lead for any staff working in clinical services (e.g. IPCAS Manager, Reception Supervisor or On Call Manager).
- 3.2. If none are unavailable, a message should be left with another a Director. Only in the most exceptional circumstances should messages be left on an answer phone or sent by text.
- 3.3. Furthermore, you will be expected to remain in touch an SHPCA Manager or Director throughout the day in order to facilitate service planning. This will normally be by telephone (land-line or mobile phone).

## **4. What if I am late for work due to severe weather conditions?**

- 4.1. If the severe weather conditions result in you being delayed in your arrival for work, then SHPCA may, at its absolute discretion determine that you will be required to make up this time at a later date.
- 4.2. Again, at the absolute discretion of SHPCA, SHPCA may determine that this requirement does not apply. Typically, this will arise where the lateness is of a particularly limited nature and, in considering this matter, the employer will have regard to the nature of the severe weather and, where relevant, any disruption there has been to public transport.
- 4.3. Staff should note, however, that SHPCA will consider matters on an individual basis, and will take account of issues such as your mode of transport (for example, whether you have access to a four wheel drive vehicle), whether it was possible to use an alternative mode of transport, whether you live very rurally, and how far you live from the office.
- 4.4. Should you be significantly late, then you should understand that SHPCA may determine that you will not be paid in respect of the time you have missed.

## **5. What if I don't get to work at all? (Failure to Attend)**

- 5.1. If you have not made reasonable efforts to reach your place of work, this could give rise to disciplinary proceedings.
- 5.2. If you have failed to attend work due to severe weather conditions, and SHPCA are satisfied that you have, in the circumstances, made all reasonable efforts and attempts to attend your place of work, then the employer may determine, at its absolute discretion, that you should take the time as annual leave, or make up for the time lost at a later date.
- 5.3. Alternatively, the employer may determine that you should take the lost time as unpaid leave. Should this occur, the employer has the right to make an appropriate deduction from your wages.

## **6. What if I am concerned about my journey home?**

- 6.1. Sometimes, severe weather may give rise to concerns regarding returning home after work. This may be because public transport is affected by the severe weather conditions, or it could be that there is other disruption to travel plans or routes.
- 6.2. In such circumstances, employees do not have a right to leave the workplace early but the SHPCA management team will monitor the situation and make a decision on whether it is appropriate for staff to leave before the end of their shifts.
- 6.3. This will be done on an individual, case by case basis, and it should be appreciated that some staff (perhaps those living much further away) may be allowed to leave early, whilst others will have to complete their shifts.
- 6.4. In making such a decision, managers will take into account several factors, including:
  - Weather forecasts and other information services,
  - The mode of transport the employee uses, and any alternative that might be available,
  - The importance of the employee's role in critical service delivery,
  - The distance from SHPCA to the employee's home, and whether the employee lives in a very rural location.

This list is not exhaustive.

- 6.5. SHPCA non-clinical staff will be allowed to work from home where appropriate as an alternative to travelling to the office/base location in instances of severe weather.