



Horndean Parish Council

Emergency Planning for Working Arrangements Policy

1. Introduction

This policy sets out Horndean Parish Council's approach to dealing with situations where normal arrangements for travelling to or attending work are disrupted. It does not form part of employees' terms and conditions of employment and may be subject to change at the discretion of the Council.

The circumstances where this may occur are:

- Adverse weather conditions
- Terrorist activity
- Building maintenance issues.

In these circumstances, the Council will have due regard to the health and safety of its employees. In general, employees have an obligation to work when they are capable of doing so and the Council has a duty to pay a normal day's pay when employees are capable of working or when the employer prevents the employee from working. An employee's ability to undertake work will depend on their role and their ability to work from alternative locations in emergency planning situations.

2. Travelling to Work

Managers should discuss an employee's delayed arrival or inability to attend their normal place of work with the employee at the earliest possible opportunity. The employee must decide on the most appropriate solution for themselves. They are not entitled to be paid for time they do not work but they should be given the options available to them.

2.1 *Localised or personal travel difficulties*

In circumstances where road accidents cause traffic congestion or where an employee's normal mode of transport fails, delaying or preventing attendance at an employee's normal place of work, the Council will be flexible and will make allowances for infrequent reasonable delays, i.e. up to 30 minutes. However, employees will be expected to make up time lost for longer delays or not being able to attend work by working back the time, taking flexi leave, annual leave, TOIL or unpaid leave.

2.2 *Adverse Weather Conditions*

The Council does not expect employees to put themselves at unnecessary risk and Appendix A to this policy contains advice on driving in adverse weather. However all employees are expected to make reasonable effort to attend their place of work.

The Council recognises that the weather is unpredictable and it will be flexible in accommodating employee difficulties.

Where weather affects travel to work the Council will accept reasonable delays.

Where weather and road conditions worsen during the working day, employees may request permission to leave work early from their line manager.

In these circumstances the Council will make reasonable allowances but employees will be expected to work back the time or take TOIL, flexi leave, annual leave or unpaid leave to cover the remaining time.

Where an employee cannot make it to their normal place of work and are unable to work from home or an alternative office they will need to take the time as TOIL, flexi leave, annual leave or unpaid leave. If the adverse conditions last for more than one day this situation will be reviewed and employees will receive a normal days pay at the discretion of the Clerk.

3. Office Closures

By closing a workplace or by instructing employees not to travel to work, the employer is preventing the employee from working on that day and, as this is through no fault of their own, they should receive pay as normal for that day. This is regardless of whether the employee has attempted to attend their workplace or not.

In the event that the employee could work from an alternative place of work, e.g. from home or an alternative office, the employee will be expected to undertake their duties or those reasonably requested by their line manager, at that site.

4. Failure of care arrangements for dependents

As a result of school closures some employees may need to take time off to care for their dependent children. In addition, care arrangements for other dependents, older or disabled relatives, may be disrupted. The Council needs to strike a balance between the need to maintain services and the pressures that fall on employees who have childcare and other caring responsibilities. The statutory right to time off to care for dependents does not provide the right to take extended leave, but only the right to take off what time is reasonable to allow the employee to deal with the unforeseen event. In these circumstances, a combination of paid and unpaid leave, building on the existing carer's leave provisions may be more appropriate than home working.

5. Staff working additional hours during emergency

Where there are increased absence levels in critical service areas, the Council may need to ask those able to get to work to work additional hours. Line managers should ask for volunteers from existing employees and agree such additional working hours. The Council will also call upon employees who have contractual overtime arrangements in place.

Bearing in mind the requirements of the Working Time Directive, additional working requirements should not be used in the long term but to cover short term 'crisis' situations. Care will be taken to ensure those working additional hours do not put their own or others'

health and safety at risk, and that they get regular rest breaks. If employees work additional hours, they will normally be remunerated through time back arrangements such as time off in lieu, or paid overtime or shift allowances in line with the normal arrangements stated in their contract of employment.

6. Misuse of these arrangements

If the Council has reason to suspect that an employee is abusing this flexible approach to lateness or absence, a full investigation will be undertaken in line with the disciplinary policy. If such abuse is established it will be treated as any other form of unauthorised absence.

Driving safely in adverse weather

Overview

The British winter is unpredictable. Bad weather can strike suddenly, so the best advice when severe weather hits is to stay off the road. If you must drive, make sure you are prepared for the conditions. This fact sheet offers you advice to help you stay safe on the roads and information to guide you if you do get into trouble.

Plan your journey during wintry weather conditions

- If your journey isn't absolutely essential, don't take the risk.
- Check the local and national weather forecasts and listen to local and national radio for travel information.
- Tell someone at your destination what time you expect to arrive.
- Make sure you are equipped with warm clothes, food, boots and a torch; in snowy conditions, take a spade.
- Clear and de-mist your windows and mirrors before you set out and carry a windscreen scraper and de-icer.
- Do not use hot water from a kettle to clear your windows, as this may crack the glass.

Keep your vehicle in good condition

- In winter, it is even more important to check that your vehicle is well maintained and serviced.
- Keep the lights, windows and mirrors clean and free from ice and snow.
- Make sure your battery is fully charged.
- Add anti-freeze to the radiator and a winter additive to the windscreen washer bottles.
- Make sure wipers and lights are in good working order.
- Check that tyres have plenty of tread depth and are maintained at the correct pressure.
- Make sure you have enough fuel for your journey. Drivers use more fuel when driving in heavy traffic and stop/start conditions

Be prepared

If you do need to travel in adverse weather conditions or when these are forecast make sure you are prepared for the worst. You should carry with you:

- a torch;
- blankets;
- wellington boots;
- an ice scraper;
- de-icer including a key de-icer to un-freeze locks;
- a first aid kit;
- food and drink, including a flask of hot drink/soup.

If you do get into trouble

- Do not use a mobile phone while driving. Instead, stop somewhere safe or ask a passenger to make the call.
- On a motorway, it is best to use a roadside emergency telephone, because it will help the breakdown/emergency services to locate you easily. If you have to use a mobile phone, make sure you know your location from the numbers on the marker posts positioned at the side of the hard shoulder.
- Abandoned vehicles can hold up rescue vehicles and snowploughs, so to ensure that the road is cleared as quickly as possible, stay with your vehicle until help arrives.
- If you have to leave your vehicle to get help, make sure other drivers can see you clearly.

Adjust your driving to the conditions

Driving in low visibility on icy or wet roads requires a very different driving style. There are some simple steps you should take to ensure your safety when exposed to the different driving hazards.

In low visibility

- When driving in hail, heavy snow or rain, use your dipped headlights and reduce your speed.

When roads are icy or slushy

- It can take ten times longer to stop, so drive slowly, allowing extra room to slow down and stop.
- When accelerating, use the highest gear possible to prevent your wheels from spinning.
- Manoeuvre gently, avoiding harsh braking and acceleration.
- To brake without locking your wheels, use a low gear earlier than normal so your engine will smoothly reduce your speed and use your brake pedal gently.
- If you do start to skid, ease off the accelerator but do not brake suddenly.

In winter sun

- Glare from the low winter sun can be dangerous, so use your visor and keep a pair of sunglasses in your vehicle.

In foggy conditions

- Expect visibility to deteriorate rapidly as fog drifts quickly and is often patchy.
- Drive very slowly and use your dipped headlights.
- Use fog lights if visibility is seriously reduced, but remember to switch them off when visibility improves.
- Don't hang on to the tail lights of the vehicle in front, as you may well be driving too close.
- Don't speed up suddenly, even if it seems to be clearing, as you can suddenly find yourself back in thick fog.

In wet weather

- Stopping distances will be at least doubled as your tyres have less grip on the wet road, so leave more distance between you and the vehicle in front to increase your ability to see, plan ahead and brake.
- If your steering becomes unresponsive, the water may be preventing your tyres from gripping the road, so ease off your accelerator and slow down gradually.
- The rain and spray from vehicles may make it difficult to see and be seen, so increase the distance between you and the vehicle in front and use your dipped headlights.

When coming across flooded roads

- If the water seems too deep, find another route instead of risking breakdown by attempting to cross it.
- If the water does seem shallow enough to cross, drive slowly in first gear and avoid the deepest water, which is usually near the kerb.
- To avoid stalling your engine while in first gear, keep your revs high by slipping the clutch.
- Remember to test your brakes when you are through the flood before you drive at normal speed.

Take care around winter road maintenance vehicles

The Highways Agency, an executive agency of the Department for Transport, is responsible for the motorways and trunk roads in England. It aims to reduce delays and accidents during wintry weather conditions by pre-treating motorways and trunk roads to prevent the formation of ice and snow, and by clearing snow from carriageways and hard shoulders as soon as conditions permit. Local Authorities are responsible similar work on the local road network.

Salting vehicles travel at speeds of up to 40 mph spreading salt across all lanes of the carriageway. Ensure you maintain a safe distance behind these vehicles and do not attempt to overtake as they often spray salt at such a speed that it can damage your vehicle's bodywork.

Snow ploughing can throw up irregular amounts of snow that may be a hazard to vehicles. Again, maintain a safe distance behind the vehicle and not to attempt to overtake

For more information on winter driving, please visit www.highways.gov.uk

For weather reports, please visit www.metoffice.gov.uk