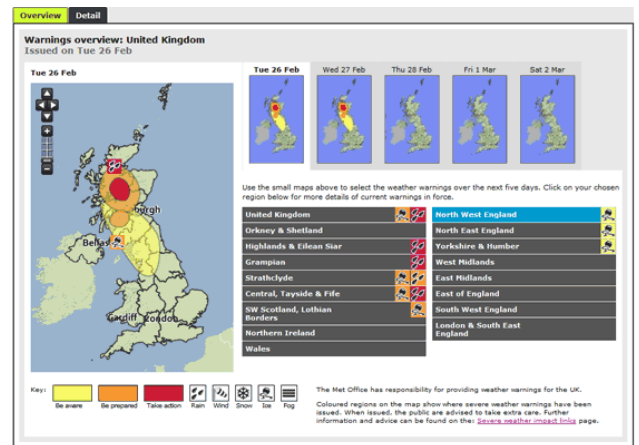


Weather Warnings and Work Activities

From time to time the UK Met Office will issue warnings about the weather. These warnings are aimed at allowing residents and businesses to prepare for the hazards that bad weather can bring.

Bad weather can affect this Council's ability to provide a service and with that in mind a lot of time and effort is put into minimising its impact and ensuring that the residents of North Lanarkshire continue to receive as many services as possible during periods of bad weather.

However managers and supervisors need to take the weather into account when considering the work activities of their own teams. A useful trigger for reviewing the activity risk assessments, and evaluating if there remains a need to undertake a particular activity, is the Met Office warning system.



The Met office use a colour based escalation system and following these announcements will help managers to plan. The warning scheme is outlined below together with some commentary on the potential corresponding actions from managers and supervisors:

- Yellow: Be aware.** “Severe weather is possible over the next few days and could affect you. Yellow means that you should plan ahead thinking about possible travel delays, or the disruption of your day to day activities. The Met Office is monitoring the developing weather situation and Yellow means keep an eye on the latest forecast and be aware that the weather may change or worsen, leading to disruption of your plans in the next few days”.

Manager Action: This level of warning should see managers/supervisors look ahead and determine if there is a need to “reorder” some work, perhaps making sure any critical work is undertaken at the earliest opportunity in-case the weather makes it difficult to undertake the work in two or three days time.

- Amber: Be prepared.** “There is an increased likelihood of bad weather affecting you, which could potentially disrupt your plans and possibly cause travel delays, road and rail closures, interruption to power and the potential risk to life and property. Amber means you need to be prepared to change your plans and protect you, your family and community from the impacts of the severe weather based on the forecast from the Met Office”.

Manager Action: At this level of warning, driving and working outside will become more difficult and managers will need to consider how to strengthen the controls used to keep track of team members and in particular lone workers. Additionally when considering the other implications of poor weather an assessment will need to evaluate the ability of team members to cope with difficult circumstances and thought needs to be given to the avoidance of particular work activities, locations and journeys etc.

- **Red: Take action.** “Extreme weather is expected. Red means you should take action now to keep yourself and others safe from the impact of the weather. Widespread damage, travel and power disruption and risk to life is likely. You must avoid dangerous areas and follow the advice of the emergency services and local authorities”.

Manager Action: It is unlikely that any programmed outside work or driving activities will be taking place. Where essential outside work is required (normally of an emergency nature), full and thorough risk assessments will be required and advice from the emergency services and other advisory services will need to be taken on board. All but the most essential of travel is to be avoided and the Council’s contingency plan for severe weather will need to be considered.

A recent fatal accident enquiry, involving NHS Western Isles, emphasised the requirement for organisations to review risk assessments in order to factor in actions needed during periods of bad weather and to take all reasonable steps to minimise risk. Employees need to contribute to

No Severe Weather	Be Aware	Be Prepared	Take Action

the risk assessment process if asked and seek guidance from line managers/supervisors if they are at all concerned about the conditions and their own (or clients’) health and safety.

Summary

Managers – review risk assessments taking on board the weather, ensure robust systems are in place to monitor the location and wellbeing of team members. Be prepared to postpone activities and return people to base/home as circumstances dictate. During “red: take action” periods the default position should be to stop all outside work and driving activities unless a risk assessment shows that risks have been effectively controlled as far as reasonably practicable and the work required is of an essential/emergency nature.

Employees – take advice from managers/supervisors and ensure you understand any temporary arrangements put in place to protect your safety. If driving, then adjust your speed to the road conditions, take a winter kit with you and seek advice from your line manager about any concerns you have about continuing to work/drive in the prevailing weather conditions.

Other Resources

AS4 – General Risk Assessment
AS32 – Driving at Work

Online training – Driving at Work, Snow Clearing and Risk Assessor Update
Driving in Bad Weather (Safer Scotland) – available on CONNECT or from Road Safety Scotland

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