

# **ADVERSE WEATHER GUIDANCE POLICY**

## **Policy Statement**

Complete Care Agency Ltd aims to provide safe & effective levels of care all year round, at all times of day & night and in all types of weather conditions. Complete Care Agency is committed to ensuring the health, safety and welfare of all its employees and Service Users, in so far as it is reasonably practicable, and in accordance with Health and Safety legislation. While Complete Care Agency endeavours to sustain the same level of care throughout the year, the Company acknowledges that there may be occasions when extreme weather conditions restrict our service provision.

## **Scope**

The purpose of this guidance policy is to ensure that all employees are treated fairly and consistently when normal travel arrangements are disrupted by severe weather conditions. The guidance is based on the clear principle that an employee's Contract of Employment requires an employee to attend for work in order to receive payment. All staff are obliged to adhere to and support the implementation of this guidance.

During adverse weather conditions Complete Care Agency will consider a range of factors impacting upon an employee's ability to attend for duty. These may include:

- The safety of the employee
- Distance and access to work
- Prevailing weather conditions and estimated duration
- An employee's regular mode of transport
- Dependant or child care issues
- Any medical impairment that may present additional barriers to attendance

## **Policy**

Adverse weather is a term which describes weather events which are particularly severe and challenge models of normal service delivery.

Adverse weather can include heavy snowfall, flooding from heavy rain, very high winds, very cold temperatures and also exceptionally high temperatures (this list is not exhaustive). Adverse weather notifications are published by the Met. Office (see Appendix 1). The net effect of adverse weather can be to disrupt public services such as nurseries, schools, colleges and public transport systems. Adverse weather frequently causes high levels of activity for emergency services and can put pressure on the healthcare system, which may in turn lead to additional demands on domiciliary care provision.

## ATTENDANCE AND REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

- a) Complete Care Agency will use appropriate methods of informing staff and Service Users of operational changes in the event of adverse weather conditions. This will include posting relevant information on Company social media sites.
- b) An employee should inform their Line Manager should they feel that their personal safety or that of the Service User is at risk in the event of adverse weather conditions.
- c) Every employee is expected to make every effort to attend work as normal, which could involve having to make special arrangements to ensure that they can attend. If an employee is late or cannot reach work, they must contact the office in the first instance to report his/her inability to attend as soon as practicably possible and in any event should contact his/her manager (or the on call person) by telephone within 30 minutes of the time when s/he is expected to start work. **It is not acceptable to give notification of lateness or non attendance via text message, email or social networking site.** Contact made in this way will be classed as a non contact and will be subject to action under Complete Care Agency's disciplinary policy.
- d) Following discussion between the Line Manager and employee, options may be discussed as to how an employee can fulfil their duty of care to the Service User and their contractual obligations to Complete Care Agency if at all possible. Each case will be an individually assessed and arrangements made accordingly.
- e) Only in exceptional circumstances with Complete Care Agency close the office base. In this case, the Company will issue a direct instruction to staff regarding the need to close buildings or reduce service provision due to extreme weather conditions. Full instructions will be provided to all staff in such circumstances.
- f) If an employee is unable to report for work due to adverse weather conditions absence will be treated as unpaid leave of absence, i.e. the appropriate deduction will be made from the employee's salary in respect of time off. Where applicable to the role, and practicable, employees may work at home at the discretion of their Line Manager.
- g) Only after discussion with Line Managers, employees can be permitted to take a reasonable amount of time off during working hours to deal with unexpected or sudden crises to allow the member of staff to make necessary arrangements and put in place any long-term arrangements. For example, to deal with a school or nursery closure, an employee may need to take time off to arrange care for their children or may need time off to care for other dependants, such as elderly relatives. Emergency leave does not equate to a day off. It is the provision of enough time to arrange alternative care. Any time taken off will be unpaid.

### 1. IMPLEMENTING THE GUIDANCE IN RESPECT OF SERVICE USERS.

The following plan will followed to ensure that disruption is minimised, the Service User is kept informed of any potential delays and in the unlikely event that their calls may be reduced, that appropriate contingency provision is put in place for them.

At the first sign that staff are finding it difficult to get to calls due to snow/ice on the roads the action will be taken:

- The person on call will identify the most vulnerable service users and prioritise their calls. These are the people who live on their own and would be unable to mobilise themselves, get food or fluids.
- If appropriate, all service users should be contacted and informed there may be delays in call times.
- Services such as cleaning, shopping, and once weekly baths etc will be cancelled and rescheduled and staff redirected to the priority clients.
- Staff will be contacted to ensure they leave all service users who live on their own with supplies of food and drinks. Staff should reassure the service user that this is a precaution only but their calls may be reduced or delayed.
- In extreme circumstances, where the service user lives with another family member, this person will be contacted and requested to assist in providing care.

## **2. REVIEW OF THIS POLICY**

This policy will be reviewed by Nicola Parker/Maggie Wardle

Date: 15<sup>th</sup> November 2013

Policy Review Date: November 2016

## APPENDIX 1

### MET OFFICE WEATHER WARNING SYSTEM

These warnings are given a colour depending on a combination of both the likelihood of the event happening and the impact the conditions may have.

The basic messages associated with each of the colours are:

<b>No Severe Weather</b>	<b>Be Aware</b>	<b>Be Prepared</b>	<b>Take Action</b>

The basic message associated with each warning level is:

Likelihood	
<b>High</b>	You may need to take action as we are expecting ..... There will be.....
<b>Medium</b>	We should be prepared for ..... There is likely to be .....
<b>Low</b>	Be aware of the potential/possibility ..... There is the small chance of .....
<b>Very Low</b>	Be aware that there is a very small risk of .....

## What the colours mean

- **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.
- **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
- **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.

Severe weather warnings are available to you in a number of ways, meaning you can always access the latest information wherever you are. This includes on radio, TV, the Met Office website, social media, smart phone apps, RSS and via email alerts.