

Severe Weather and Disruption to Public Transport/Air Travel Affecting Attendance at Work

1. Introduction

- 1.1 University of Manchester Conference Ltd (UMC) (“the company”) recognises that its employees may face difficulty from time to time attending work during periods of severe weather or when there are disruptions to public transport or air travel.
- 1.2 Whilst the company is obviously committed to safeguarding the health and safety of its employees, it must ensure that disruption to its business remains minimal, and therefore the purpose of this policy is to outline the *normal*, minimal arrangements for treatment of employees who cannot attend work during periods of severe weather conditions or disruptions to public transport/ air travel.
- 1.3 The policy also sets out the responsibilities of employees for attendance in these circumstances.

2. Scope

- 2.1 The policy aims to be applicable to a broad range of disruption, including severe weather such as heavy snow, disruption to public transport due to a variety of reasons, and disruption to air travel for reasons such as industrial action and the ash cloud caused by the eruptions from the Eyjafjallajökull volcano in Iceland in 2010.
- 2.2 However, it is recognised that the policy cannot anticipate or address every potential event that might have a widespread impact on the ability of employees to attend or remain at work.
- 2.3 The policy is not intended to deal with sickness absence or unforeseen breakdowns in childcare arrangements, which fall within the scope of the company’s Policies on *Management of Sickness Absence* and *Special Leave* respectively.

3. Responsibility of Employees

- 3.1 Employees should make every effort to attend work in all circumstances, whilst at the same time they must not put themselves at unnecessary or inordinate risk when trying to do so, within the scope of this policy.

4. Application

- 4.1 The policy provisions will be deemed to apply when there are severe weather conditions or disruptions to public transport or air travel that prevent an employee from attending work.

5. Normal provisions

- 5.1 If an employee has made all reasonable efforts to attend work but has failed to do so because of severe weather conditions or disruption to public transport or air travel, it is the responsibility of their line manager to make a decision as to whether the employee should:
- i. take the time as annual leave;
 - ii. make up the lost time at a later date;
 - iii. take unpaid leave;
 - iv. be allowed to work from home or remotely.
- 5.2 The decision will be taken after consultation with the employee.
- 5.3 Managers should normally decide on a case-by-case basis whether it is appropriate for employees to leave work early, whilst taking appropriate account of their circumstances (e.g. distance to travel, mode of transport), issues of health and safety as well as business operating needs.

6. Business Closure

- 6.1 In extreme circumstances such as the weather conditions, the University's Registrar and Secretary or, in their absence, their designated representative, may decide to close any part of the company's business areas at the beginning or during the working day, or late on the preceding day.
- 6.2 In this event, following efforts to notify managers, a message will be sent out to employees by the company's senior management team via local management teams.
- 6.3 In the event of closure during the course of a working day, it will specify the time at which most employees will be expected to leave the premises in order to ensure an orderly and managed closedown.

- 6.4 At the same time the planned re-opening of the business will also be confirmed to all affected staff.
- 6.5 Means of further notification of closure over the subsequent days via telephone, email or other modes of communication will be made clear to all affected employees.
- 6.6 It remains the absolute responsibility of each employee to report for work for their next working day at their pre-arranged/normal start time unless otherwise notified above (6.4-6.5)
- 6.7 Employees will be paid as normal for the period of closure.
- 6.8 Employees who are able to work remotely will be encouraged to do so during the closure.

7. Employees stranded following a holiday

- 7.1 Employees stranded overseas due to air travel disruption who cannot return to work on the expected date should make every effort to notify their manager at the earliest opportunity.
- 7.2 Stranded employees should also make every reasonable effort to return to the UK at the earliest opportunity in such circumstances
- 7.3 The normal arrangements for dealing with an additional period of absence in such circumstances will be for the employee to:
 - i. take the time as annual leave;
 - ii. make up the lost time at a later date;
 - iii. take unpaid leave;
 - iv. work remotely (e.g. checking and dealing with email).
- 7.4 The precise arrangements will be decided by the employee's manager after consultation with the employee and taking into account their views and preferences, as it may be possible to offer a combination of options.

8. Employees stranded following a business trip

- 8.1 The company will attempt to advise and/or assist employees who are unable to return to the UK after a visit overseas on company business, which may include advice on and/or assistance with accommodation and alternative transport.
- 8.2 In such circumstances, employees will be able to claim reasonable expenses associated with their late departure, covering reasonable expenditure on accommodation and/or alternative means of travel, and it will not be expected that the employee takes the time as leave.

8.3 Employees will be encouraged to undertake any duties that it is possible for them to perform remotely (e.g. checking and responding to email).

9. Review

The policy will be the subject of review after any major incident which affects employee attendance in order to consider its effectiveness, in line with any changes implemented to the University of Manchester's *Severe Weather and Disruptions to Public Transport Policy*.

Document control box	
Policy / Procedure title:	Severe Weather and Disruptions to Public Transport Policy
Date approved:	
Approving body:	UMC Ltd Board of Directors
Version:	3
Supersedes:	October 2016
Previous review dates:	August 2014
Next review date:	
Equality impact outcome:	
Related Statutes, Ordinances, General Regulations:	
Related policies:	
Related procedures:	
Related guidance and or codes of practice:	
Related information:	
Policy owner:	UMC-designated HR Partner
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