

RM Severe Weather Risk Assessment Guidance

Introduction

This guidance is for all functions and is designed to help you assess the impact of various weather conditions and ensure that suitable controls are put in place to reduce the risk. Our aim is to keep the operation running where safe to do so but in extreme weather ceasing operations may be necessary.

The likelihood of accidents and ill health can increase significantly during severe weather (e.g. road traffic collisions, slips/trips/falls, sunburn, and heat exhaustion/stroke).

You should consult with your local safety rep where possible (when preparing for severe weather, completing your assessment and communicating outputs).

Severe Weather Preparation

You must complete the preparation checklist (currently only available in hard copy) twice a year – this will be signposted in My Office Calendar. The activities (examples below) will ensure adequate planning and supplies in severe weather.

- Updating emergency contact lists
- Developing contingency plans – e.g., if you are unable to use vehicles, delivery equipment, unable to access roads or areas (remember to consider the full geography of your operation)
- Checking supplies of equipment e.g., spike keys/grippers, torches, de-icer, screen wash, scrapers etc.
- Reviewing gritting arrangements
- Reviewing temporary cooling/heating arrangements
- Reviewing severe-weather accident history
- Reviewing flood control plans

Lack of preparation will result in a higher level of risk on the day and a potential for injuries/ill-health.

It is recommended as part of your preparation, that you complete a practice scenario with your Safety Rep and staff to simulate what you would do and how you would manage the situation.

Supporting individuals who are at increased risk

It is important to speak to your staff and identify if they are at increased risk when working in extreme heat. This is so you can plan for any duty adjustments required in the event of a severe weather warning for heat. A brief to help you with this task is at Appendix 2.

The following are examples of groups that might be at increased risk. The list is not exhaustive - people may have other conditions that are not shown here.

- people aged over 65 years.
- people with underlying health conditions, particularly heart problems, breathing problems, dementia, diabetes, kidney disease, Parkinson's disease, mobility problems, serious mental health problems.
- people on certain medications (such as those that lead to inadequate sweating) or people on multiple medications.
- people with alcohol or drug dependence.

Remember that all medical information must be classified as strictly confidential and handled/stored securely in accordance with our information security policy.

If you have any individuals who fall under the 'Persons Specifically at Risk' process (disability, young person, new or expectant mother), the impact of all types of severe weather should be considered in their risk assessment.

On the Day Assessment

It is important that you gather information from a wide range of sources such as:

- Met Office and UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) websites (subscribe for email notification)
- Local radio/news
- Your own observations of the weather conditions
- Reports from employees who have travelled in to work or are returning to the office.
- Reports from employees who are on the road/at different sites.
- Discussions with the Unit Safety Representatives, where they exist.
- Known/historical areas of higher risk e.g., high ground/steep terrain.
- Communications from Central Postal Control (CPC).

Weather warnings/alerts

You need to be aware of weather warnings or alerts from the Met Office and/or the UKHSA. An explanation of what each type of warning/alert means can be found below.

Met. Office Weather Warning Definitions

UKHSA Heat Health Alert Definitions

Note: the Met. Office doesn't currently issue yellow weather warnings for heat or red weather warnings for fog.

Severe Weather Managers Assessment (SWMA)

The [SWMA](#) is designed to be used on the day of severe weather but should be reviewed:

- During the day if there is a significant change in the conditions
- During the day if there is an accident resulting from the severe weather
- Each day throughout a period of severe weather

Guidance on completing the assessment is available within the document itself.

Managing the Risk

The flowcharts in Appendix 1 specify the action that must be taken for each warning/weather type. As the severity of the weather increases the extent of the controls (including duty adjustments) must also increase. For example, if there is an amber warning for snow, stopping the use of equipment outdoors is not sufficient on its own in reducing the risk to an acceptable level.

A list of duty adjustments and controls applicable to weather types can be found in Appendix 2.

Any routes in Delivery Offices that do not complete due to adverse weather (either in full or partially) must be reported via Delivery Office Daily Reporting /Customer Operations Daily Reporting.

Communication

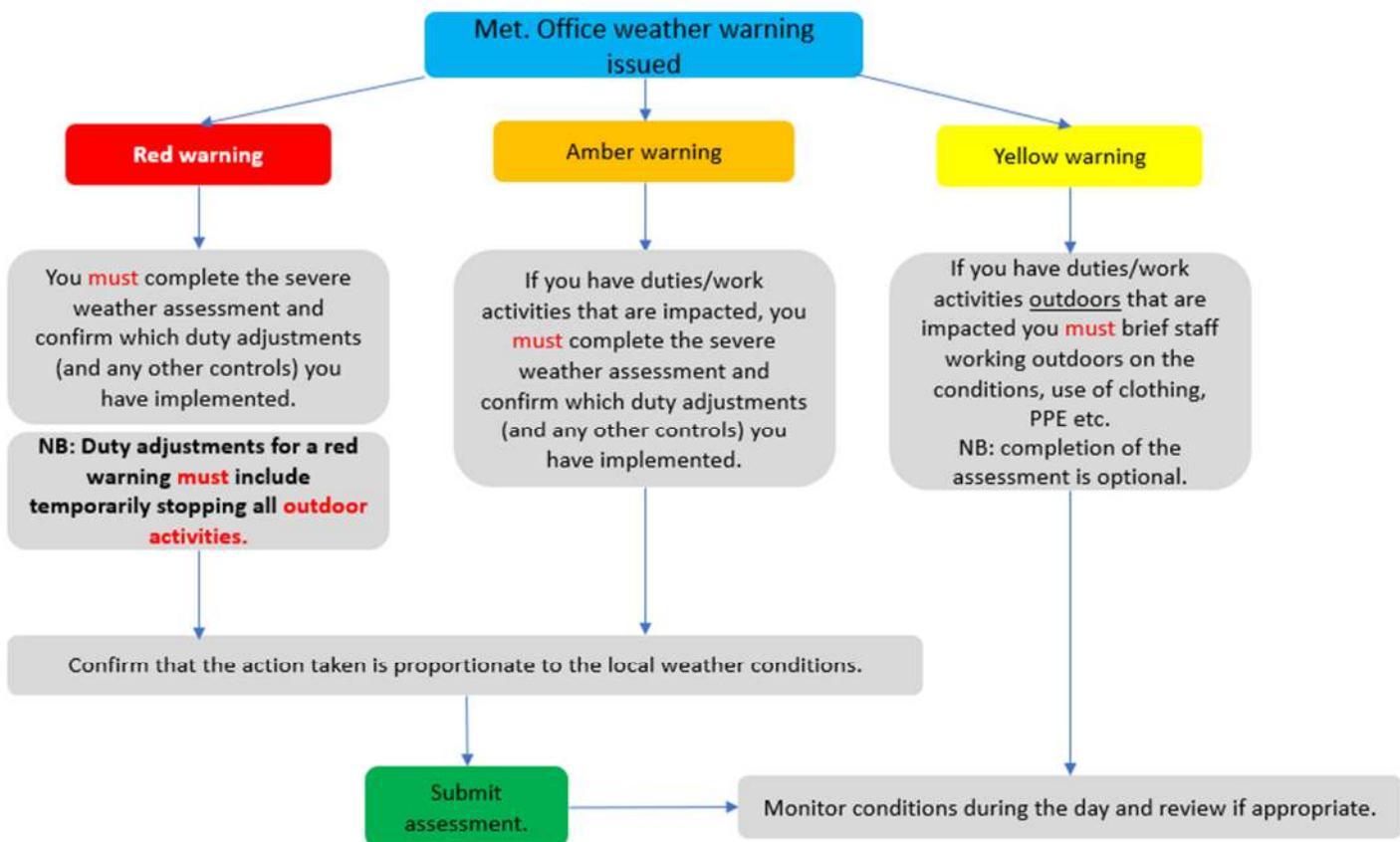
You must communicate to staff what they need to do during the period of severe weather and keep a record of what was briefed. In Operations, this must include making staff aware they need to apply Dynamic Risk Assessment and are empowered to make decisions such as returning to their unit/not attempting to make a delivery or collection at a given location. Click [here](#) for severe weather communication materials.

Checking for damage

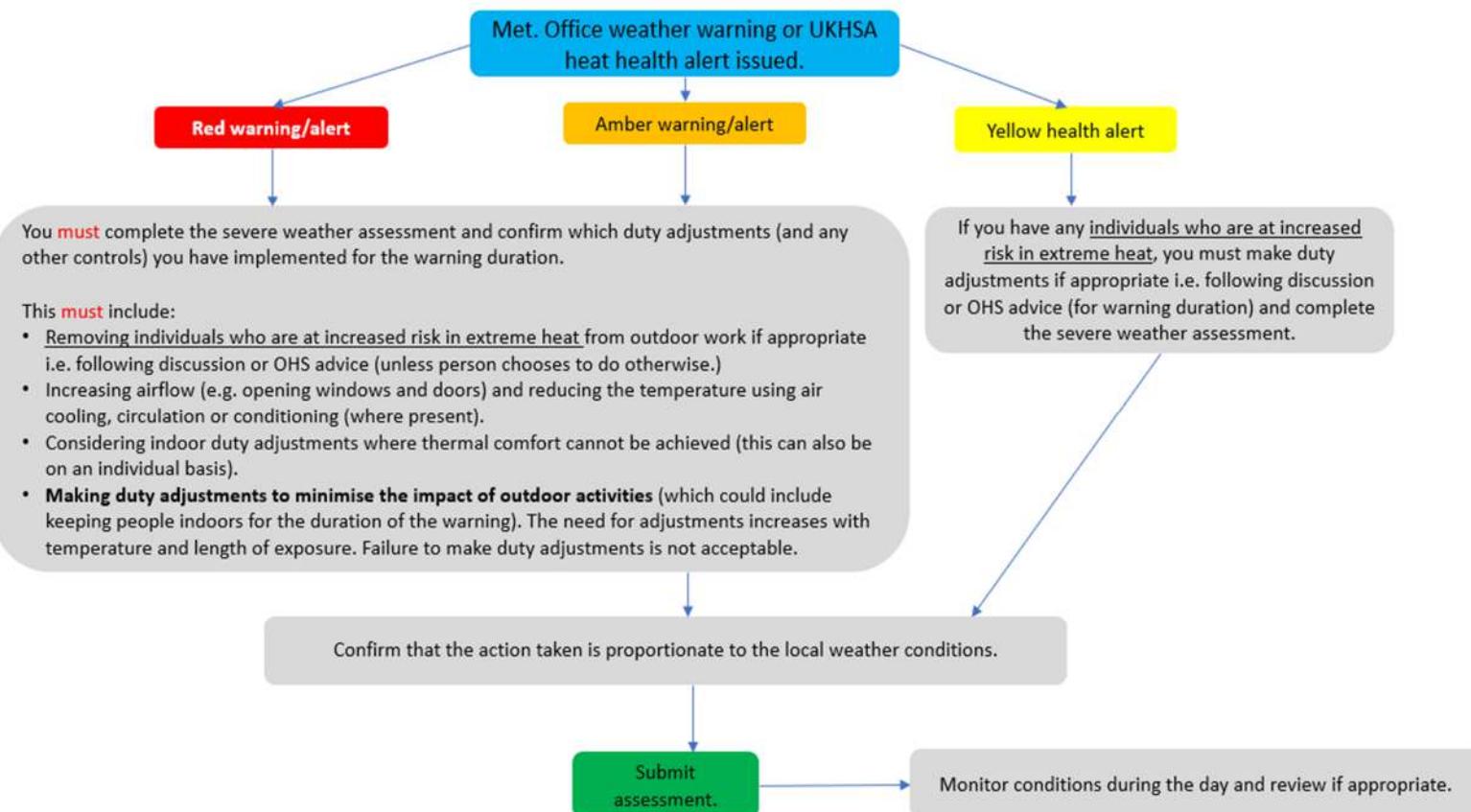
It is important that you check your building and surrounding structures for signs of damage or instability before, during (if safe to do so) and after severe weather. This should include canopies, gutters and downpipes, signs of water ingress, cladding and flashing, scaffolding and temporary structures, and trees and branches.

| Version No. | Date of Issue/Change | Author | Description of change |
|-------------|----------------------|----------------|-----------------------|
| 1.0 | 10/09/2024 | Joanna Hosking | First issue |
| | | | |

Appendix 1: Severe weather process excluding heat



Appendix 1: Severe weather process for heat only



Appendix 2: Identifying and supporting individuals who are at increased risk

In addition to our key messages on staying safe in the sun, we want to give people the opportunity to make us aware of any specific conditions e.g., health conditions or medication that puts them at increased risk when working in extreme heat. This is so you can discuss what individual support or duty adjustments might be needed in the event of a severe weather warning for heat.

Use the huddle message (Increased Risk in Extreme Heat) to provide this opportunity. Based on your knowledge of staff you may already be aware of individuals that might be affected and can approach them on a one-to-one basis.

Remember that all medical information must be classified as strictly confidential and handled/stored securely in accordance with our information security policy.

What to do if someone makes you aware they may be at increased risk

Discuss if duty adjustments are needed - these must be made with the individual's agreement. Use the Severe Weather Duty Adjustments Form to record any duty adjustments agreed. It is important to recognise and accept that the individual may not consider adjustments necessary and wants to continue their duty as normal – this should also be recorded on the form.

If an individual has an underlying health condition, is taking medication, or has any other specific issue but is unsure if this will affect them in extreme heat, they should contact their own doctor/medical professional before potential duty adjustments are discussed with them.

If an individual has an underlying health condition, is taking medication, or has any other specific issue and following a discussion with them you are still unsure about what duty adjustments are appropriate and need further advice please contact our occupational health service provider.

Appendix 3: Duty adjustments and controls.

| | Snow/ Ice | Rain | Wind | Fog | Heat |
|--|--------------|------|------|-----|------|
| Affected outdoor activities have been stopped temporarily e.g. off-site delivery/collection or on-site vehicle maintenance. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Affected routes been re-routed to minimise or avoid weather impact e.g. high-sided vehicles to avoid exposed areas or bridges, vehicles diverted around flooded roads. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Duty lengths have been amended e.g. shortened to reduce exposure. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Start/finish times have been amended e.g. earlier start time. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Use of equipment has been stopped temporarily e.g. no high-capacity trolleys, cycles, or use of forklifts outdoors. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Homeworking has been allowed where applicable/practical e.g. admin staff to avoid travel. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Weights have been reduced temporarily (i.e. pouch and/or trolley weights). | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| Staff have been briefed on the impact of the weather (e.g. any duty changes, use of clothing/PPE, emergency procedures if conditions deteriorate, etc). | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| A contact strategy has been implemented. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Staff have been provided with appropriate clothing and PPE. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Snow clearance and gritting of pedestrian access/egress routes has taken place at the unit. | ✓ | | | | |
| Staff have been provided applicable emergency equipment e.g., warning triangle/beacon, flask, torch, shovel, windscreen scrapers etc. | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ |
| Doors, shutters, side curtains etc. have been secured. | | | ✓ | | |
| Outdoor areas have been inspected for evidence of loose building materials, trees, branches, etc. | | | ✓ | | |
| Comfort breaks have been increased. | | | | | ✓ |
| Number of people carrying out a task/activity has been increased e.g. loading and unloading. | | | | | ✓ |
| Task rotation has been increased. | | | | | ✓ |
| Windows/doors have been opened where possible to increase air flow. | | | | | ✓ |
| Temporary air-cooling equipment has been provided where required (e.g. fans). | | | | | ✓ |
| Drinks/drinking facilities have been provided. | | | | | ✓ |