
Severe Weather Guidance Note

Human Resources/Information Services

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Severe Weather Guidance Note

1 Background

The University's priority is to ensure that its business is uninterrupted throughout the year. However, there may be times when severe weather affects how we do things. When deciding how to respond to severe weather, the University will be conscious of the health, safety and welfare of staff, students and visitors.

The University aims to open all buildings, whatever the weather, but there may be times when this is not possible.

In making decisions, the following principles will be considered:

- The University will normally remain open during snow or freezing conditions;
- Staff and students should assume that the University is operating normally, unless told otherwise;
- Staff and students should attend as normal if it is possible and safe to do so;
- Staff unable to get to work must contact their line manager to confirm they cannot come to work;
- The University's [Special Leave Policy](#) provides guidance on absences due to severe weather. Staff may be able to take unpaid leave, work from home or use annual leave to deal with their absence.

If snow and freezing conditions continue for an extended period, the University will implement its Business Continuity Plan. This will come into operation if conditions cause extreme disruption to travel and result in a loss of essential services such as power, water and heating. If the University needs to close any or all buildings, staff and students will be told through the University's website and email service. All staff should keep a note of the direct dial number for the University switchboard and their Faculty/Department.

- The main University number is 0141 552 4400.
- Website address is <http://www.strath.ac.uk>

Closure details will be passed to appropriate media outlets by Media and Corporate Communications. In addition, details of any closure will be posted to the University's Twitter and Facebook accounts:-

- Twitter - www.twitter.com/unistrathclyde
- Facebook - www.facebook.com/UniversityOfStrathclyde

Staff may also be contacted directly by their line manager. The University will issue these communications as early as possible, taking all factors into consideration.

In an emergency, the University may contact staff and students by SMS or "text messages". This facility is only available if staff have entered their mobile phone number in My Personal Details, which is accessible through [Pegasus](#) in the Human Resources tab.

2 Working from home

Ideally, staff should have discussions with their managers in advance of any bad weather, to identify activities that could reasonably be carried out away from the office in the short-term. Staff who are unable to attend work should talk to their line manager at the earliest opportunity to see if they can work from home. Working from home for employees of all staff categories is at the discretion of Heads of Department/line managers and is likely to be suitable only where appropriate work is available which is either paper or computer based.

Consideration will be given to:

- Whether the employee can access the information required easily and quickly from home;
- Whether the output of the work from home can be clearly defined and measured; employees may be asked by their line manager to confirm that agreed work has been carried out.

Examples of homeworking might include the following types of work:

- Preparing policies, budgets, tenders, reports and similar documents;
- Preparing and marking assessments;
- Preparing teaching material;
- Preparing research proposals and similar documents.

Staff with caring responsibilities as a result of the extreme weather conditions, for example, due to school closures, should refer to the arrangements in the University's Special Leave Policy. It may be possible to arrange alternative care arrangements for all or part of the day. Where this is not possible, and staff members have direct caring responsibilities, it is unlikely that they will be able to work from home whilst simultaneously caring for dependents. Staff who need unplanned time off to care for dependents are legally entitled to ask for unpaid leave for this purpose.

3 IT, Data Protection and Security

Staff working from home have a duty to take all reasonable precautions to protect all information relating to their employment in the University. When working from home for any reason, it is important that any confidential, sensitive or commercially valuable information is fully protected. In order to ensure this, it is essential that staff comply with the Protection of Information Held on Mobile Devices and Encryption Policy, which can be found on the [Information Security](#) page of the University's website. Additional information on protecting personal information and that of the University when away from the campus, can be found at <https://www.strath.ac.uk/professionalservices/is/cybersecurity/>. Staff who are using a laptop or other mobile device that is not encrypted – or who simply need further advice – should contact either the ISD Helpdesk or local IT staff for assistance.

Services available for use off campus include:

- access to H: and I: drives
- access to email (NEMO)
- access to online services such as PFACT, PECOS, MyPlace, Pure and Sharepoint.

Staff can use PEGASUS to download software for use at home for academic and business purposes. This includes the Microsoft office packages and anti-virus software.

For more information go to:

<https://www.strath.ac.uk/professionalservices/is/help/indepth/networkdrives/>

These facilities should be tested in advance of needing them to ensure that any problems can be resolved with advice from the IT Help Desk.

All staff should additionally note:

- Information which contains data about identifiable living individuals is subject to the Data Protection Act. Staff working at home should be aware of and understand their obligation to keep data confidential and secure;
- University laptops are covered for use out with the campuses under the University's insurance policy, subject to the usual terms and conditions.

4 Health and Safety

The University will ensure that all reasonable steps are taken to protect the health, safety and welfare of its staff wherever they carry out their work. Staff also have a personal responsibility for their own health and safety when conducting all work. Staff should extend the safe working practices that they apply to similar work in the workplace to their workstation at home. Staff working with display screen equipment will normally have received online training to enable them to understand the basic principles of setting up appropriate work stations. For reference, the guidance for staff is provided in the Local Rules on Display Screen Equipment and the HSE Publication "Working With Display Screen Equipment" (INDG 36), <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg36.pdf>.

Staff should remember to:

- take regular breaks from the computer;
- make sure home workstations are set up appropriately;
- where working from a laptop not set in a docking station, ensure that additional mini- breaks are taken throughout the day;
- ensure that workstations are uncluttered and free from tripping hazards.

Please be aware that there are separate [Guidelines for Homeworking](#) for staff who work on an occasional basis from home outwith times of severe weather.