



## **ATTENDANCE AT WORK GUIDELINES DURING EXTREME WEATHER OR OTHER EXTREME CIRCUMSTANCES**

It is recognised that there may be times when it is problematic for staff to travel to work. This may be when your normal mode of transport is not possible due to extreme weather<sup>1</sup> or public transport strikes or other circumstances occur which are beyond staff members' control. Although it is anticipated that such problems will be rare this document has been written to provide guidelines should such circumstances arise.

### **Guidelines for Staff**

Generally individuals choose where they live and how they travel to work. If you travel to work by car and are unable to get to work because of the weather or another reason e.g. national fuel shortage or some other circumstance, it is expected that you will make every effort to attend work by making alternative arrangements, e.g. public transport. Likewise, if your preferred mode of transport is by bus or train and there is a public transport strike you are expected to arrange, where possible, alternative travelling arrangements e.g., car-sharing.

- It is expected that every member of staff will make every reasonable effort to get to work.
- During extreme weather, buses may be running but unable to reach some areas. It is not unreasonable to expect someone to use an alternative nearby bus stop on an open route.
- It is essential to phone your Head of School or Unit (HoS/U) or Line Manager to let them know if you are going to be delayed or unable to attend work as soon as reasonably possible and no later than one hour after your expected starting time. Clearly there may be times when this is not possible and allowances will be given in circumstances when there is no access to a phone. However, contact should be made as soon as reasonably practicable in such instances.
- It will be expected that you will make every reasonable effort as far as practicable to inform your HoS/U or Line Manager of your inability to attend. Where the HoS/U or Line Manager has not been notified that you are unable to attend work as planned, and there is not a reasonable explanation available, this would count as unauthorised absence and therefore be unpaid.
- If you do arrive late because of extreme weather or other such extreme circumstances you will not normally be expected to make up the time lost. Likewise, if you feel you need to leave work earlier than normal because of

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<sup>1</sup> 'Extreme weather is defined as snow, ice, fog, floods, which render extremely hazardous journeys by road, by both public and private transport



extreme weather you should consult with your HoS/U or Line Manager. In the case of worsening, or particularly hazardous conditions you should be able to leave work earlier than usual without having to make up any time lost.

- There may be circumstances where your inability to attend work is caused by a need to provide emergency care for family purposes e.g. in the event of school/nursery closures, illness or other family situation. Such situations are not covered by these guidelines and would need to be considered by your HoS/U or Line Manager in accordance with other relevant policies and practices.

## **Guidelines for Heads of School or Unit/Line Managers**

HoS/U and Line Managers should ensure that staff are clear what reporting arrangements apply in the event that a member of staff within their area anticipates difficulty getting to work or late arrival. This should be consistent with information already provided to staff for sickness absence or other forms of leave.

There are a wide range of factors which can apply and a decision as to how time off should be categorised is a local one for the HoS/U or Line Manager. However, consistency and fairness is very important. While accepting that staff should not take unreasonable risks in attempting to get to work in difficult or extremely hazardous<sup>2</sup> conditions, there should not be a disincentive to staff that do make a particular effort. Staff are expected to make reasonable efforts to find alternative means of getting to work which do not, in the case of extreme weather, cause a health and safety risk. The following factors should be taken into account by the HoS/U or Line Manager when exercising discretion in these circumstances:

- Staff should check if public transport is running or if alternative travel arrangement are possible e.g. walking, car sharing etc. In cases where alternative transport is available staff will be expected to make use of it even if this differs from their normal mode of transport.
- Where it is likely that the extreme weather or circumstance preventing the staff member from attending work will continue, working from home should be considered. This is dependent on the nature of employment and whether circumstances permit this to happen.

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<sup>2</sup> Extremely hazardous' is defined as those conditions in which the police and/or appropriate motoring organisations advise people not to make unnecessary journeys or indeed travel at all.



- Where it is known that the member of staff has mobility problems special care should be taken in reaching a decision relating to attendance and pay. HR Services will advise on such cases.

When a member of staff has not been able to attend work at all on a particular day due to extreme weather, or other extreme circumstances outside their control (including campus closure) then the HoS/U Line Manager may come to an agreement with that individual to allow them to:

1. take a day's annual leave, or
2. elect to have a day's authorised leave without pay, or
3. work at home, or
4. make up the time/hours lost within one month of the occurrence

## **Additional General Guidelines**

- In the event that weather conditions deteriorate during the working day and it appears that staff may have difficulty in travelling home, The University will consider whether staff should leave work early. A decision to this effect will be communicated to all areas. Information from the AA, the Gardai, Met Eireann and local radio will be taken into consideration when making such a decision. No loss of pay to staff will be involved.
- In the event that weather conditions do not improve resulting in absence of more than one day, staff members should maintain regular contact with their HoS/U or Line Manager.
- Although the University will not be unreasonable, should extreme circumstances prevent a member of staff attending work, alternative arrangements will be required should a regular or consistent pattern of time-off as a result of extreme weather occur. This may be due to the member of staff living a considerable distance from work or in a remote area. In such cases, consideration should be given to a combination of paid, unpaid or annual leave being used during absences.
- The campus may be closed from time to time following a full health and safety assessment. Where this occurs, and a staff member indicates that they still wish to attend work on the campus, this will not be possible as the health and safety considerations along with UCD's duty of care as the employer will necessarily take precedence over individual requests.