
	<h1 style="margin: 0;">SAFETY ALERT</h1>				
Ref:SA:006:03	RE: - Winter safe- safety precautions				
Issue date:	December 2015	Revised Date:	December 2019	Review Date:	December 2021
Author(s):	NHSF – Information & Advisory Team				
Distribution:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Heads of Departments, Service Managers <p>Please ensure that this Safety Alert is brought to the attention of all relevant persons in the workplace.</p>				
S	<p>SITUATION: Be winter ready - are you prepared for severe weather? Severe weather challenges all of us. Activities that we undertake at work and at home can become more hazardous in severe weather conditions.</p>				
B	<p>BACKGROUND: Adverse weather conditions refer to unfavourable or potentially harmful weather conditions that present an increased risk to safety and health.</p>				
A	<p>ASSESSMENT:</p> <p>A risk assessment should be conducted to determine the risk management controls required for all eventualities. Each area should have an Emergency Response Plan to follow in the event of adverse weather conditions.</p> <p>Such a plan could include/detail the following please note this is a non-exhaustive list):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The resources required, e.g. materials and equipment available to deal with localised flooding, clearing or gritting of external surfaces as appropriate. The Preventative Maintenance plan to protect the building e.g. heating, frozen pipes, branches of trees and the structural integrity of the building. A policy of getting to work and the management of work activities if severe weather conditions arise e.g. causing road closures due to flooding etc. Procedures for ensuring the safe access and egress to the workplace, e.g. who is going to raise the alert when icy conditions or flooding arises? When are surfaces going to be gritted? Who is going to carry out the gritting or placing of sandbags? Who is responsible for ensuring adequate supply of grit and sandbags? Identify clear roles and responsibilities to cope with such situations e.g. management responsibility at regional and local level. In buildings where there is no designated service owner the most senior person(s) on duty should assume responsibility for ensuring that appropriate arrangements 				

	are in place and implemented.
R	<p>RECOMMENDATIONS:</p> <p>What additional precautions have you taken to reduce the impact? The National Health and Safety Function strongly advises all HSE employees to visit the severe weather section of the HSE website which contains useful tips, advice and help. Click here.</p> <p>The Government Task Force on Emergency Planning prepared has launched a Be Winter Ready information campaign. It provides practical advice and information on being prepared and safe during episodes of severe weather. It provides contact details of organisations and agencies that can provide guidance and assistance.</p> <p>The main message is be prepared, stay safe and know where to find help should you need it.</p> <p>Hazards: Some tips during adverse weather conditions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure the adverse weather plan is followed and there is clear direction and cohesion from local management and key personnel.• Ensure all employees /customers, visitors and public are aware of the hazards and risk associated with adverse weather conditions, issue information to staff on precautions that they can take during the period which could include driving tips etc.• Take a proactive stance when implementing control measures. Risk assess the various areas. As a priority put sandbags at openings where water could gain access and clear or grit all access routes and areas with high pedestrian use e.g. footpaths, walkways, entrance and exits within your control. Other areas should be prioritised thereafter.• All relevant documentation and records should be retained on file with appropriate information e.g. date and times of gritting exercises and who completed such tasks.• Ensure all incidents and accidents are recorded to the SCA in accordance with local procedures. <p>Hazards: Driving for Work In Winter - some tips.</p> <p>HAZARDS associated with driving for work in the winter increase greatly. Darker, shorter days and bad weather such as rain, hail, fog or snow reduce visibility. High winds, ice and slush can make vehicle control more difficult. Winter sun tends to be low and can cause glare.</p> <p>Is the trip necessary - Limit travel as far as possible to essential journeys only If you have no option but to drive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Listen to weather forecasts, travel bulletins, advice issued by An Garda Síochána [www.garda.ie] or the Road Safety Authority [www.rsa.ie].• Change or delay your journey as appropriate.• Plan your journey, stick to major routes where possible. Allow extra time for your journey.<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Inform your employer, manager or supervisor as to where you are going and your estimated arrival time so that an alarm can be raised if

you fail to arrive.

- Turn your lights on to ensure that your vehicle is visible to other road users.
- Fill your washer bottle with windscreen wash. The concentration used should be appropriate for the weather conditions.
- Reduce your speed and drive according to the road and weather conditions, maintain greater stopping distances (double in wet weather and ten times greater in icy weather).
- Wear sunglasses if the sun is low.
- Avoid harsh braking or acceleration. Carry out any manoeuvres slowly and carefully.
- Never feel pressurised to complete a journey if weather conditions are too dangerous.

Is your vehicle in a roadworthy condition prior to driving? Please check that the;

- Tyres are in good condition and inflated to the correct pressure (including the spare).
- Vehicle has plenty of fuel.
- Wipers, defrosters and lights are in good working order.
- Ice-scraper or de-icer is available for ice or snow.

Carry an emergency kit in your vehicle containing items such as:

- A high visibility, reflective jacket or vest (so that you can put it on before you leave the vehicle).
- A torch with extra batteries.
- An emergency warning triangle.
- A mobile phone – for use only when parked.

In cases where travel is unavoidable in extreme weather conditions, consider carrying items such as:

- Warm clothing including a hat, gloves and a warm blanket or sleeping bag.
- Boots.
- Food and a warm drink in a flask.
- Shovel and materials for providing wheel traction if driving on soft ground or snow (such as chains, old carpet, sand, gravel or salt).

For more advice and information click on www.winterready.ie for more or contact emergency.planning@hse.ie