

# Severe Weather Policy



*Although there's no such thing as one-size-fits-all policy, the Model Policy below is a good starting point for adaptation, regardless of where in Canada you are, because it includes the basic elements you need.*

## **1. PURPOSE**

ABC Company recognizes that severe weather and other emergency conditions may make it extremely dangerous for employees to come or remain at work. The purpose of this Policy is to set out clear rules and procedures to ensure that ABC Company is prepared to handle these emergency situations safely and with minimal disruption and all employees understand their work-related responsibilities and rights when and if they occur.

## **2. GENERAL POLICY**

Employees' safety is ABC Company's highest priority. Thus while ABC Company expects all employees to make reasonable efforts to report to work when the offices and facilities are open for business during periods of severe weather, it neither requires nor expects anybody to take unreasonable and unnecessary risks. The same principles apply when severe weather occurs after employees have already reported to work but need to leave early for their own safety.

## **3. DEFINITION**

For purposes of this Policy, "severe weather" means emergency conditions caused by weather that cause major disruptions to transportation and/or pose a significant threat to safety, including but not limited to:

- Snowfalls of one foot or more;
- Severe sleeting or icing of roadways;
- Flooding affecting transportation;
- Hurricanes and damaging winds;
- Loss of heat in the winter;
- Declarations of emergencies asking people to stay off the roads.

#### 4. SCOPE OF POLICY

This Policy applies to ABC Company employees that drive or travel to work, whether at an ABC Company work site or an off-site location; it does not apply to employees that work purely remotely without driving or traveling. The principles, policies and procedures set out in this Policy also apply to emergencies not caused by weather, such as fires, earthquakes and acts of violence or terrorism.

#### 5. EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES

ABC Company does not encourage employees to attempt to drive or travel to work if it would unreasonably endanger their safety. Employees who fail to report to work or report late due to severe weather when the Company is open for business will not be penalized for absence or lateness, provided that they do four things:

- Closely monitor weather and travel conditions and use good judgment in making the decision about whether to attempt driving or traveling to work.
- If they decide not to make such an attempt or to report late, immediately notify their [supervisor/manager] by phone, email and/or text message of their decision and why they made it.
- Where possible, make prior arrangements to manage their work tasks, e.g., keep phone appointments with clients.
- Where employees are compensated for the time they miss, make up that time by:
  - Working late;
  - Using a day of their annual vacation (if the absence is half to a whole day);
  - Using time off in lieu;
  - Working from home if appropriate for the role and if feasible (at the manager's discretion); or
  - [List any other options you provide (e.g., personal days, inclement weather days, etc.).]

#### 6. ACCOMMODATIONS FOR CHILD CARE ARRANGEMENTS

Where ABC Company remains open during periods of inclement weather, employees with young children who would otherwise report to work but cannot do so because of the cancellation or closure of their normal daycare or other child care provisions will be permitted to bring their children to work, provided that they notify and get their supervisor's prior permission.

#### 7. BUSINESS CLOSURES

ABC Company will make a determined effort to continue operating during periods of severe weather but will close for the day or early after the work day has started where it is deemed necessary in the interests of safety. [List department(s)] is/are responsible for making that determination using the following procedures [describe your decision making procedures].

- Closures Prior to the Start of the Work Day

If severe weather is predicted and ABC Company makes the determination to close before the work day begins, it will notify employees of the closure and its expected duration by [describe notification methods, e.g., posting closure information on the company website, emailing/phoning/texting notice]. Employees scheduled to work the day such a closure occurs [will/will not] receive credit for a [full/half/other] work day for that day.

- **Closures During the Work Day**

If ABC Company decides to close early or open late due to severe weather during the work day:

- It will credit employees who reported to work and remained at work until the offices were officially closed for [select one] a full day of work/no less than the call-in pay to which those employees are entitled under the [province] employment standards laws.
- Employees who are on sick leave, or who have previously approved annual or paid leave, time off in lieu of overtime or leave without pay, before the workplace closing will be required to take that leave as previously requested and approved.
- Employees who do not report to work will be required to make up for the hours missed in accordance with Section 5(4) above.