**Natural Disaster (Adverse Weather)**

**Responsibility in Getting to Work Policy**

**Policy:** 20 DHBs Adverse Weather/Natural Disaster- Responsibility in Getting to Work

**Purpose:** This policy outlines the responsibility of staff to get to work in adverse weather conditions, or when a natural disaster occurs.

**Scope:** This applies to all 20 DHB employees

Definition: This policy applies to adverse weather conditions, a natural disaster or similar event which impacts on employees ability to get to work. While this policy can be utilised for a natural disaster such as an earthquake, there may well be additional issues that may need to be considered when looking at an employee’s personal situation. Guidelines can be sourced from the State Services Commission. Regard should also be given to the DHBs Emergency Planning policies and procedures.

**Policy**

**Statement:** The prime responsibility for getting to and from work rests with individual employees. However, the 20 DHBs recognise that there are occasions when:

* Roads and public transport are officially closed by adverse weather conditions, or a natural disaster, or Police advise public to stay home.
* Other events beyond the DHB control cause difficulties for staff in getting to work.

In these circumstances, employees have a responsibility to make every reasonable effort to come to work, but if they are unable to do so, to notify their manager or designate.

**Anticipation of Adverse Weather:**

Where possible, staff should consider whether any work can be taken home in anticipation of travel difficulties (e.g. snow and flood warnings or road/ public transport closures), or whether alternative arrangements can be organised prior to their need.

**Staff Responsibilities:**

Employees are expected to make every attempt to arrive at work and to be on time. Efforts should continue to be made as long as it is safe to do so, until it would no longer be feasible to attend (e.g. shortly before the end of a roster). If staff are delayed, but notify their manager or designate (leaving a message if unable to speak to them direct) that they will be delayed, and arrive at work at the earliest possible time, they will be paid for their complete shift.

Consideration should also be given, in certain circumstances, whether work can be sent to the employee at home using available technology if the employee is unable to get to work.

**Payment:**

If staff are unable to attend work due to an event as defined above and have notified their manager or designate of the situation, the employee will be paid for the hours of the complete shift at ordinary time. However, if it is found that:

1. No attempt to travel or notify their manager has been made, **or**
2. The employee did not arrive at work despite the reopening of roads and public transport: -

The absence will be recorded as leave (e.g. annual leave, leave without pay). The choice of payment made therefore remains at the discretion of the delegated manager on a case by case basis.

N.B:

* *Where staff who are primary caregivers of school-age children have to stay home because of unplanned school closures as a result of adverse weather conditions, a natural disaster or other similar event, annual leave, or leave without pay will apply. While each situation will be addressed on a case by case basis, staying at home to attend children when schools are closed is not a reason on its own to be absent from work. Leave to be absent must be granted by the manager or designate.*
* *Where a staff member is on annual leave outside of their district and because of an adverse event cannot return to work on the previously agreed date, then any days taken beyond the previously agreed return date will be considered to be annual leave days.*

**Taxis/Emergency/Transport:**

Unless otherwise entitled or have proper authorization, staff may not charge taxi fares to or from work to the DHB, nor order any emergency transport that may be provided in-house.

Where managers deem that the employee’s presence is essential, the DHB may provide emergency transport assistance to ensure they arrive on time. However, it remains the employee’s responsibility for getting home again and any further assistance is discretionary.

Where the employer has provided assistance for the employee to come to work and the employee is unable to return home, through the use of public transport, then the employer may assist the employee to return home.