

No. 230/26

17 August 2026

Royal Mail Group – Severe Weather Guidance Updated Version (v2.3)

Dear Colleagues,

The purpose of this LTB is to advise Branches, Representatives and members alike of an updated version of the RMG Severe Weather Guidance, which reflects previous and ongoing discussions held with Royal Mail to date.

As a means of background, we have been in discussions with Royal Mail on seeking enhancements to its overall Severe Weather Guidance, which is the Royal Mail Group's primary safety document designed to address all-year-round severe weather conditions, but with recent focus obviously covering the ongoing spell of extreme heat.

Whilst updated versions of the Severe Weather Guidance have been issued to CWU Safety Reps during this period of discussions to ensure enhancements made are communicated at the time, and following the former RMG Severe Weather Guidance (v1.0) issued last year. For direct reference, please find attached to this LTB the latest version of the guidance.

All Representatives (both Safety and IR) are encouraged to make themselves familiar with the full details of this Severe Weather Guidance, but particular attention is drawn to the following details:

- The Severe Weather Guidance covers all operations, functions, and business units and should be used by all managers who have line manager responsibility.
- The guidance supports Royal Mail's duties under the Health and Safety at Work etc, Act 1974, and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, which require the assessment and control of risks arising from severe weather conditions, including extreme heat.
- The guidance is clear on the matter of CWU Workplace Safety Representatives (WSRs) and Area Safety Representatives (ASRs) consultation around severe weather assessments, including involvement in the severe weather twice-a-year preparation checklist activity.
- It outlines the inclusion of UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) Alerts as part of the overall Severe Weather Guidance.

- It confirms the need and requirement for advanced and individual support for members at increased risk due to extreme heat, alongside outlining an initial list of examples of such groups of individuals.
- It confirms that all managers who have line manager responsibility should subscribe for email notifications from both the MET Office and UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA).
- It confirms that a Severe Weather Manager Assessment (SWMA) and duty adjustments are required at the point of a UKHSA Yellow Alert in the case of heat, for members at increased risk.
- It confirms that a SWMA and duty adjustments are required for all other members at the point of a UKHSA Amber and Red Alert, and MET Office Amber and Red Warnings, in the case of heat.
- It confirms that all managers who have line manager responsibility must brief staff when there is a UKHSA Yellow Alert and MET Office Yellow warning. It confirms that a Severe Weather Manager Assessment and duty adjustments are required at the point of a UKHSA Amber and Red Alert, and MET Office Amber and Red Warnings, in the case of other severe weather conditions. With the temporary stoppage of all outdoor activities in the case of a Red Alert/Warning against other weather conditions.
- It further confirms that in the case of all individuals who fall under the 'Person Specifically at Risk' process (disability, young person, new or expectant mother), the impact of all types of severe weather should be considered in their risk assessment.
- It offers a list of duty adjustments and controls applicable against different types of weather conditions and covers both indoor and outdoor working. It includes the provisions of additional breaks with workload adjustments to support these breaks being taken in the case of heat.
- It confirms that all managers who have line manager responsibility must communicate to staff what they need to do during the period of severe weather and keep a record of what was briefed.
- It confirms the need to make staff aware that they need to apply Dynamic Risk Assessments and are empowered to make decisions such as returning to their unit/not attempting to make a delivery or collection at a given location/s, in severe weather conditions.
- The guidance confirms that in the case of RED Warnings/Alerts from the MET Office or UKHSA, a national level urgent meeting will be held to review and agree further required actions.
- The guidance outlines that a central database will record all submitted Severe Weather Manager Assessments in the case of MET Office or UKHSA

Warnings/Alerts. This database will be shared with the CWU nationally for onward circulation to CWU ASRs to support confirmation of the mandatory application of these severe weather assessments.

- In summary, it confirms the direct requirement for an assessment and adjustment in working arrangements linked to the outlined levels of UKHSA and MET Office Alerts and Warnings. This means that when such levels of Alerts and Warnings are in place, risk reduction controls must be put in place locally and clearly communicated.

Whilst our discussions to date have resulted in enhancements to the former Severe Weather Guidance issued last year, our talks continue, in particular, in relation to the matter of Red MET Warnings and UKHSA Red Alerts covering heat, which remains an area of disagreement between us and RMG.

Accordingly, both parties have now agreed to escalate these discussions upwards with the aim of seeking to establish common ground on this point, but in the absence of any wider Health and Safety regulations covering a maximum indoor and outdoor working temperature.

It is hoped that the circulation of this most up-to-date version of the RMG Severe Weather Guidance will offer further assistance to Branches, our Representatives and members in dealing with this current and unprecedented spell of extreme heat, alongside other severe weather conditions going forward.

Any enquiries regarding this LTB should be referred to the DGS(P) Department, email address: Hford@cwu.org or ACorbett@cwu.org.

Yours sincerely,

Martin Walsh

Deputy General Secretary (Postal)

Severe Weather Guidance

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1.0 Introduction

This guidance is for Royal Mail Group covering, all functions and all managers who have line manager responsibility. It is designed to help you assess the impact of various weather conditions and ensure that suitable controls are put in place to reduce the risk to staff. Our aim is to keep the operation running where safe to do so but in extreme weather ceasing operations may be necessary.

The likelihood of accidents and ill health can increase significantly during severe weather (e.g., road traffic collisions, slips/trips/falls, sunburn, and heat exhaustion/stroke).

This guidance also supports Royal Mail's duties under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, which require the assessment and control of risks arising from severe weather conditions, including extreme heat.

You should consult with your local Communication Workers Union (CWU) Safety Representative or Area Safety Representative (ASR) where available, providing this can be done in a timely manner (when preparing for severe weather, completing your assessment, and communicating outputs).

2.0 Severe Weather Preparation

You must complete the preparation checklist (available in hard copy) twice a year, this will be signposted in My Office Calendar. The activities (examples below) will ensure adequate planning and supplies.

- Updating emergency contact lists.
- Developing contingency plans – e.g., if you are unable to use vehicles, delivery equipment, unable to access roads or areas (remember to consider the full geography of your operation).
- Checking supplies of equipment e.g., spikeys/grippers, torches, de-icer, screen wash, scrapers etc.
- Reviewing gritting arrangements.
- Reviewing temporary cooling/heating arrangements.
- Reviewing severe-weather accident history.
- Reviewing flood control plans.

Lack of preparation will result in a higher level of risk on the day and a potential for injuries/ill-health. It is recommended as part of your preparation, that you complete a practice scenario with your Unit Safety Rep (and ASRs where available) and staff to simulate what you would do and how you would manage the situation.

3.0 Supporting individuals who are at increased risk

It is important to speak to your staff and identify if they are at increased risk when working in extreme heat. This is so you can plan for any duty adjustments required in the event of a severe weather warning for heat.

The following are examples of groups that might be at increased risk. The list is not exhaustive - people may have other conditions or vulnerabilities that are not shown here.

- People with underlying health conditions, particularly heart problems, breathing problems, dementia, diabetes, kidney disease, Parkinson's disease, mobility problems, serious mental health problems.
- People on certain medications (such as those that lead to inadequate sweating, or that may affect their ability to regulate body temperature) or people on multiple medications.
- People who carry medication that may be sensitive to high temperatures.
- People with alcohol or drug dependence.
- Employees aged 60 years and older.
- New or Expectant mothers.

Remember that all medical information must be classified as strictly confidential and handled/stored securely in accordance with our information security policy. Where duty adjustments are required, managers can record this using the [The Royal Mail Passport](#).

If you have any individuals who fall under the 'Persons Specifically at Risk' process (disability, young person, new or expectant mother), the impact of all types of severe weather should be considered in their risk assessment.

Where duty adjustments are put in place for vulnerable individuals, consideration should be given to recovery plans for the return to normal working arrangements to manage increased workloads arising from the temporary arrangements.

3.1 What to do if someone makes you aware they may be at increased risk

Discuss if duty adjustments are needed - these must be made with the individual's agreement. Use The RMG Passport process to record any duty adjustments agreed. It is important to recognise and accept that the individual may not consider adjustments necessary and wants to continue their duty as normal.

If an individual has an underlying health condition, is taking medication, or has any other specific issue but is unsure if this will affect them in extreme heat, they should contact their own doctor/medical professional before potential duty adjustments are discussed with them.

If an individual has an underlying health condition, is taking medication, or has any other specific issue and following a discussion with them you are still unsure about what duty adjustments are appropriate and need further advice please contact our occupational health service provider.

Importantly, in advance of expected severe weather brief employees to encourage them to highlight any concerns linked to individual health conditions. This is so you can plan for any duty adjustments required.

4.0 Managing Severe Weather

4.1 On the Day Assessment

It is important that you gather information from a wide range of sources such as:

- Met Office and UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) websites (subscribe for email notification).
- Local radio/news.
- Your own observations of the weather conditions.
- Reports from employees who have travelled in to work or are returning to the office.
- Reports from employees who are on the road/at different sites.
- Discussions with the Unit Safety Representative (or ASRs) were on-site and/or contactable.
- Known/historical areas of higher risk e.g., high ground/steep terrain.
- Communications from Central Postal Control (CPC).

4.2 Weather Warnings/Alerts

You need to be aware of weather warnings or alerts from the Met Office and/or the UKHSA. An explanation of what each type of warning/alert means can be found below by accessing the following web sites:

[Met. Office Weather Warning Definitions](#)

[UKSHA Heat Health Alert Definitions](#)

The Met Office issues weather warnings at any time, day or night, to alert the public about potentially hazardous weather conditions. They provide warnings up to seven days in advance for various weather events, including rain, thunderstorms, wind, snow, lightning, ice, extreme heat, and fog. The warnings are color-coded to indicate the severity of the weather and the likelihood of impacts, with yellow, amber and red warnings representing different levels of risk.

The UKHSA issue weather health alerts throughout the year, the Weather-Health Alerting System includes both Heat-Health Alerts (HHA) and Cold-Health Alerts (CHA). The core alerting seasons for HHA run from 1 June to 30 September, and for CHA from 1 November to 31 March. If a period of heat or cold occurs that meets alerting criteria outside of these core alerting periods, an extraordinary alert will be issued. This system is designed to provide early warnings to the health and wellbeing of the population, ensuring that the public and health services are prepared for adverse weather conditions.

The Met Office and the UKHSA work together to address health impacts during adverse weather events. They collaborate to ensure that health warnings and alerts are aligned, focusing on the health effects of extreme weather. Their partnership includes monitoring weather forecasts and conducting joint risk assessments to issue alerts that target vulnerable populations, such as older adults and those with health conditions.

In some circumstances, one organisation may issue an alert without the other. This typically reflects differences in focus for example, where risks are primarily to vulnerable individuals (e.g. during periods of heat) rather than the wider population. Therefore, both Met Office warnings and UKHSA alerts should be considered together and acted upon where issued.

Note that local weather conditions may vary considerably to any warning or alert issued, and therefore the assessment and controls implemented must be proportionate to those local conditions.

Note: the Met. Office does not currently issue yellow weather warnings for heat or red weather warnings for fog.

4.3 Met Office Red Weather Warnings

For Met Office Red Weather Warnings (including heat-related events), a provisional tri-partite call will be scheduled in advance of any potential escalation to support rapid mobilisation of senior stakeholders if the Red threshold is met.

Once a Red Warning is issued, a high-level meeting will be convened at the earliest opportunity to review and agree required actions, involving senior leads from RMG Operations, Health and Safety, and Unite CMA and CWU National Officers, as agreed.

4.4 Severe Weather Managers Assessment (SWMA)

The SWMA is designed to be used on the day of severe weather but should be reviewed:

- During the day if there is a significant change in the conditions.
- During the day if there is an accident resulting from the severe weather.
- Each day throughout a period of severe weather.

Guidance on completing the assessment is available within the document itself.

In the case of locations with more than one operation on-site, the relevant managers where required should undertake a SWMA (in consultation with the Unit Safety Representative or ASRs were on-site and/or contactable). For example, a manager responsible for a dedicated parcel operation and/or collection operation at a Delivery Unit should undertake a SWMA for their area of the operation and to account for its particular nature and geographical area. Equally, distribution and collection managers at larger sites e.g. such as Mail Centres should undertake their own SWMAs separate from the on-site Severe Weather Manager Assessment, with the SWMA covering both the indoor and outdoor operations as applicable.

Additionally, larger sites such as Mail Centres, Distribution and Parcel Hubs (and sites with 24-hour operations) should continue to review the initial SWMAs during the day and as conditions change. This may mean the need to undertake new SWMAs during the day against shift patterns.

Where managers have responsibility for staff working across a larger geographical area than a single unit (e.g., Parcel delivery routes/Collections across more than one Delivery Office area), the manager must consider the weather across the whole area and may need to implement different controls in different parts of the area due to varying conditions. They may also find it useful to liaise with unit managers in the same geography to see what controls have been implemented for other impacted staff doing similar work.

4.5 Managing the Risk

The flowcharts (see appendix 1 and 2) specify the action that must be taken for each warning/weather type. As the severity of the weather increases the extent of the controls (including duty adjustments) must also increase. For example, if there is an amber warning for snow, stopping the use of equipment outdoors is not sufficient on its own in reducing the risk to an acceptable level.

A list of duty adjustments and controls applicable to weather types can be found in appendix 3.

Any routes in Delivery Offices that do not complete due to adverse weather (either in full or partially) must be reported via Delivery Office Daily Reporting /Customer Operations Daily Reporting.

5.0 Communication

5.1 Communication During Adverse Weather

- You must communicate to staff what they need to do during the period of severe weather and keep a record of what was briefed. In operations, this must include making staff aware they need to apply Dynamic Risk Assessment and are empowered to make decisions such as returning to their unit/not attempting to make a delivery or collection at a given location/s'. Severe Weather communication materials can be found under SHE Instruction: Risk Management, 5.1.9 Severe Weather, including the SHE Huddle message - Increased Risk in Extreme Heat.

5.2 Severe Weather Manager Guide – HR Policy

The Severe Weather Manager Guide is a separate RMG policy which sets out the arrangements for employees who are unable to attend work due to extreme weather conditions. This operates independently from the Severe Weather Guidance contained within SHEMS.

6.0 Checking for Damage

It is important that you check your building and surrounding structures for signs of damage or instability before, during (if safe to do so) and after severe weather. This should include canopies, gutters, downpipes, signs of water ingress, cladding and flashing, scaffolding and temporary structures, trees and branches.

7.0 Governance and Assurance – Submissions and Audit Process.

SWMAs must be completed and submitted in response to all Amber and Red weather warnings, ensuring a consistent and risk-based approach to operational decision-making during severe weather events.

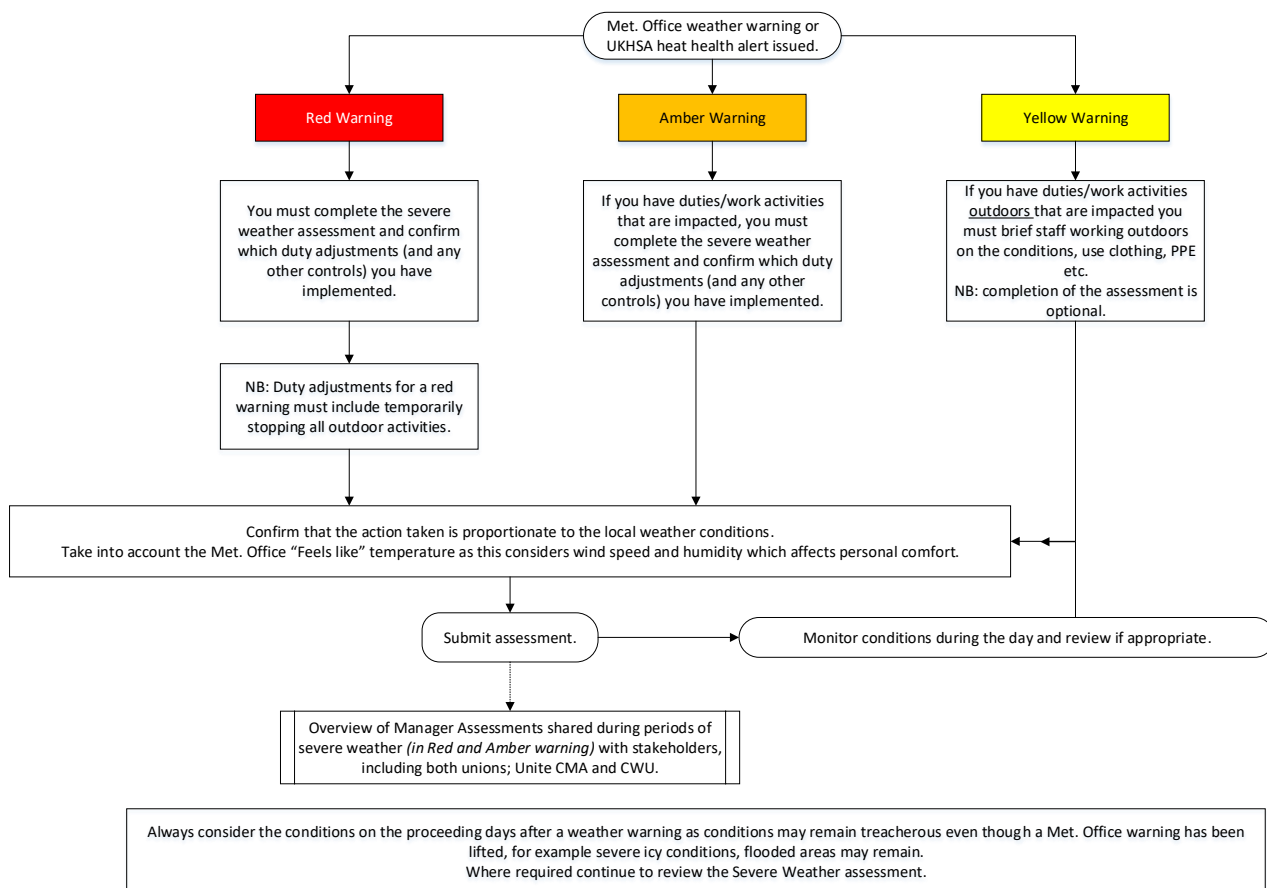
All submitted SWMAs are subject to a central audit process to provide oversight, assurance and consistency of application across the business. A record of submissions will be shared nationally with the CWU and Unite Communication Managers Association (Unite CMA) and retrospectively circulated to both the Unite CMA and CWU ASRs to support confirmation of the mandatory application of these assessments.

Failure to complete or appropriately apply an SWMA in line with these requirements may result in escalation through relevant governance and assurance processes.

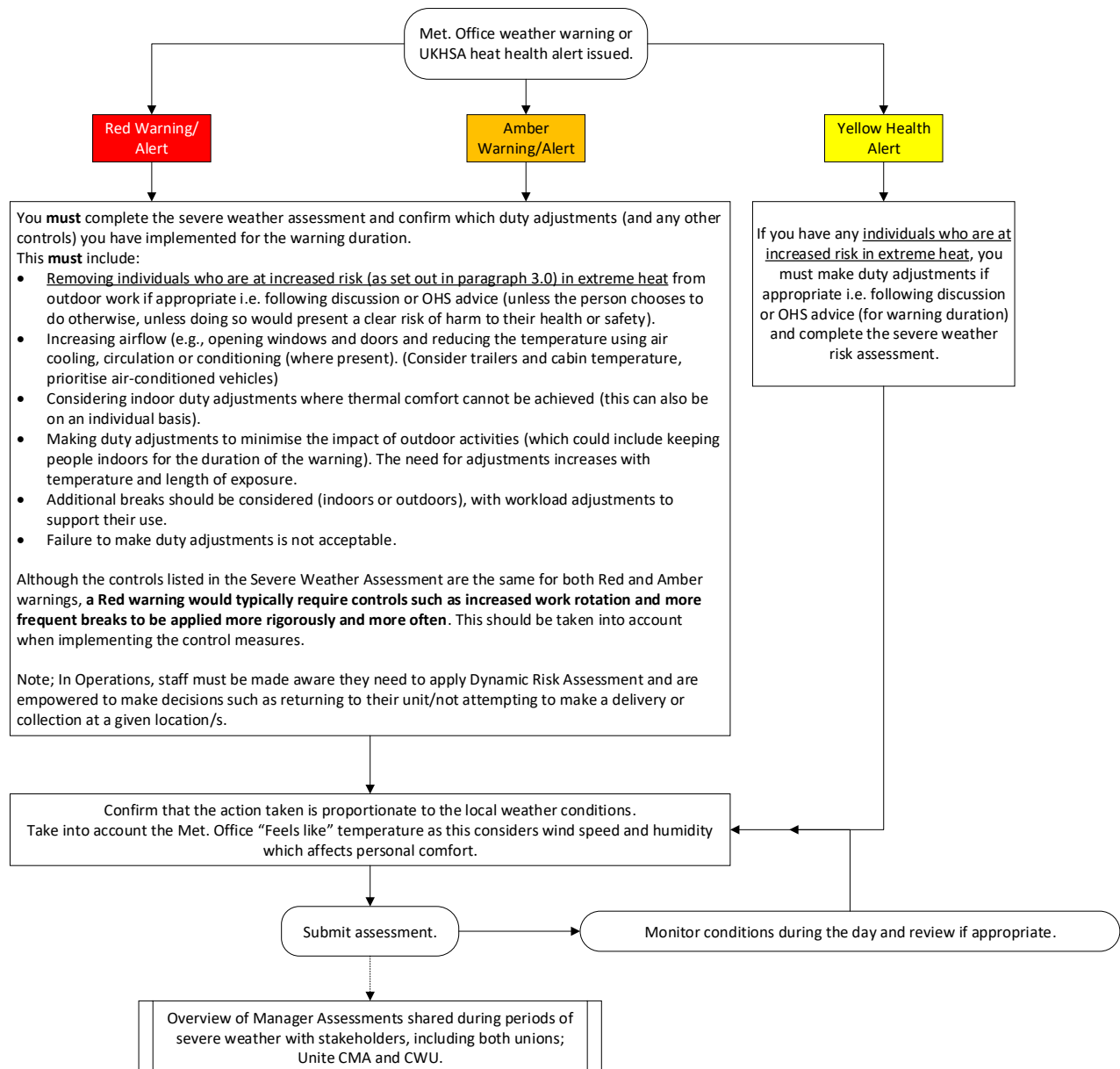
8.0 References

- Severe Weather Managers Assessment
- The Royal Mail Passport
- Met. Office Weather Warning Website
- UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA)
- Severe Weather Manager Guide – HR Policy
- SHE Huddle message - Increased Risk in Extreme Heat

Appendix 1: Severe weather process (excluding heat)



Appendix 2: Severe weather process heat



In addition to our key messages on staying safe in the sun, we want to give people the opportunity to make us aware of any specific conditions e.g., health conditions or medication that puts them at increased risk when working in extreme heat. This is so you can discuss what individual support or duty adjustments might be needed in the event of a severe weather warning for heat.

Use the SHE Huddle message (Increased Risk in Extreme Heat) to provide this opportunity. Based on your knowledge of staff you may already be aware of individuals that might be affected and can approach them on a one-to-one basis.

Appendix 3: Duty Adjustments and Controls

Consider both indoor and outdoor working any specific work areas that could present an increased risk such as trailers.	Snow/ Ice	Rain	Wind	Fog	Heat
Affected outdoor activities have been stopped temporarily e.g., off-site delivery/collection or on-site vehicle maintenance.					
Affected routes been re-routed to minimise or avoid weather impact e.g., high-sided vehicles to avoid exposed areas or bridges, vehicles diverted around flooded roads.					
Duty lengths have been amended e.g., shortened to reduce exposure.					
Start/finish times have been amended e.g., earlier start time.					
Application of the 'contingency triangle' to prioritise mail items to ensure outdoor working is minimised where required.					
Use of equipment has been stopped temporarily e.g., no high-capacity trolleys, cycles, or use of forklifts outdoors.					
Homeworking has been allowed where applicable/practical e.g., admin staff to avoid travel.					
Weights have been reduced temporarily (i.e., pouch and/or trolley weights).					
Staff have been briefed on the impact of the weather (e.g., any duty changes, use of clothing/PPE, emergency procedures if conditions deteriorate, etc).					
A contact strategy has been implemented.					
Staff have been provided with appropriate clothing and PPE (staff and managers can refer to the uniform catalogue for technical features of each uniform item e.g., breathability, UV protection, moisture wicking fabrics, warmth etc).					
Advise employees that, during rest breaks and where it is safe and practicable to do so, PPE should be removed or loosened to assist cooling and improve comfort. PPE must be reapplied before work activities recommence.					
Consider if singleton duties should be sent out in pairs to improve safety against weather conditions.					
Snow clearance and gritting of pedestrian access/egress routes has taken place at the unit.					
Staff have been provided applicable emergency equipment e.g., warning triangle/beacon, flask, torch, shovel, windscreen scrapers etc.					
Doors, shutters, side curtains etc. have been secured.					
Outdoor areas have been inspected for evidence of loose building materials, trees, branches, etc.					
Comfort breaks have been increased, with workload adjustments in place to support this.					
Number of people carrying out a task/activity has been increased e.g., loading, and unloading. (Consideration of trailer temperature must be made).					
Task rotation has been increased. (Consideration of trailer temperature must be made).					
Windows/doors have been opened where possible to increase air flow.					
Temporary air-cooling equipment has been provided where required (e.g., fans). (Consideration of trailer temperature must be made).					
Drinks/drinking facilities have been provided (and potential requirement for increased toilet breaks).					

Ensure staff are aware that they need to apply Dynamic Risk Assessment and are empowered to make decisions such as returning to their unit/not attempting to make a delivery or collection at a given location/s.



SHE Alert

Ref:	FY26 007 Severe Weather – Extreme Heat	Date of Issue:	23.06.2026	Author	Elizabeth Lloyd, Ricky McAuley & Jamie Stephenson
Priority to Communicate:	Immediate		Signatures Required (Yes/No)		No
SHE Alert Delivery by;	Managers				

Audience:	All employees: Delivery, Collections, Distribution, Processing, Parcelforce, All other functions
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Overview	Red and Amber weather warnings forecast for extreme heat.
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Issue

Red and Amber heat weather warnings are currently in place across the UK. To keep people safe, we are sharing this alert to support a consistent and transparent approach to risk assessment and management. This alert outlines the key actions required to manage severe heat and is based on the Severe Weather Manager Assessment.

All units impacted by weather warnings must complete a Severe Weather Manager Assessment, this is undertaken in consultation with the local Communication Workers Union (CWU) Safety Representative or Area Safety Representative (ASR) where available.

The approach is grounded in managing risk rather than temperature alone. Controls, including cessation of certain activities, will be applied where the assessment indicates this is necessary.

In completing the Severe Weather Manager Assessment document, managers should:

- Assess the impact on different employee groups, giving particular consideration to colleagues who may be more vulnerable to the effects of extreme heat.
- Apply controls that are proportionate to the level of risk identified and the operational activities being undertaken.
- Consider the specific operating environment, including local temperatures, humidity, exposure to direct sunlight, availability of shade, ventilation and duration of exposure.
- Consider what adjustments can be made to duties, workloads, weights being handled, work locations, start and finish times, or work methods to reduce exposure whilst maintaining safe operations. The need for adjustments increases with temperature and length of exposure. This could also include controlling and considering wave 2 arrivals and/ or normal operational contingency arrangements and prioritisation to enable an earlier departure.
- Consider suspension of door to door.
- Additional breaks should be considered (indoors or outdoors), with workload adjustments to support their use.
- Indoors, increase airflow (e.g. open windows/doors, use air conditioning or fans) and apply adjustments where thermal comfort cannot be maintained. (Bay / dock doors should not be opened, creating a risk of falling/interaction with vehicles).
- Affected indoor higher-risk tasks that may increase heat exposure or cause thermal discomfort, e.g. work in restricted spaces or hot works should be reviewed and adjusted where required.
- Recognise that weather conditions will change throughout the day and review controls as temperatures and operating conditions change.
- Record and communicate any significant decisions made through the assessment process, including the rationale for controls applied.
- Ensure employees are briefed on the controls in place and empowered to undertake dynamic risk assessment where local conditions change.

The purpose of the assessment is to ensure risks arising from heat are managed appropriately based on local conditions. Controls should be proportionate to the risk identified and reviewed throughout the period of severe weather.

Where operationally practical, consider changing attendance times to reduce work in the peak of the day when

temperatures will be at their highest point. This needs to be considered on an activity basis with operational impacts on last mile delivery managed in line with the current contingency process.

As an employee it is your duty to follow the advice shared from the Severe Weather Manager Assessments on controls put in place and follow the stay safe in heat communications such as;

- Make your manager aware of any health conditions that may specifically impact your health and wellbeing in heat.
- If you feel unwell during your duty: stop, seek first aid support and report it to your manager.
- Keep hydrated throughout the day.
- Cover Up - Wear long, loose clothing to keep the sun off your skin. Your uniform is made from a special fabric to protect against ultraviolet radiation.
- Protect your head - Don't forget your head, face, ears and neck. Wear the wide brim hat that's part of your uniform – it's specially treated to protect against the sun. Remember to use sunglasses with UV protection.
- Take breaks in the shade - Come out of the sun when you have the chance, especially during the most powerful ultraviolet periods.
- Use sun cream - SPF 30 or higher on any exposed skin; apply it half an hour before going outside, put plenty on and reapply it frequently.
- Be skin safe - Report mole changes (size, shape, colour, itching or bleeding) or any other concerns about your skin to your doctor as soon as possible don't put it off, early treatment is important. If you have any medical condition that can be exacerbated by heat, please make your manager aware.
- Undertake continuous dynamic risk assessment while working in heat, monitoring your own condition and the environment and report to your manager immediately if you feel unwell or conditions change and become unsafe.
- Engage in local assessments and follow additional temporary control guidance.

It is important to note that in some instances of Severe Weather (Red warnings) (e.g. high winds) we have seen the blanket sweeping of controls such as, pausing the operation based on public guidance. In Severe weather in relation to heat, this can impact people in different ways, which is why risk assessments are locally based using national guidance as we need to consider conditions locally and the impact of the heat condition on people and infrastructure.

Learning / Action Points – What do we need to do now

- Brief the Alert to all employees, and agency staff.
- Please click the link to access the applicable [Severe Weather Manager Assessment](#).
- Click here to access the [Severe Weather guidance](#).