

# Disruption

Procedure

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## Overview

### What is this about?

This procedure sets out our expectations for staff when their ability to report for work is disrupted. While it is impossible to provide an exhaustive list of disruptive events the following examples are provided as guidance:

* National emergencies;
* Disruptions to road networks or public transport;
* Severe weather;
* Building maintenance; or
* Interrupted utility supplies.

### Who is this for?

This applies to all authority/police staff and managers.

### Key information

* All staff are expected to make every possible effort to report for work during periods of disruption. However, individual safety and that of others must not be compromised in the process. This includes following advice, instruction or guidance and being careful when traveling to and from working premises.
* To ensure the health, safety, and wellbeing of the workforce, control measures may be put in place on a case-by-case basis, to:
	+ Provide information, guidance, training, equipment, or resources.
	+ Restrict access to workplaces.
	+ Provide alternative workplaces.
	+ Monitor staff attendance.

## Staff/Officer

### What you need to do:

* Prepare for known or anticipated periods of disruption.
* Take all reasonable steps to report for work.
* Make yourself aware of the business continuity arrangements for your department.
* Contact your manager promptly if you are unable to report for work or meet your scheduled commitments.
* Keep your manager informed of any changes affecting your ability to work.

### Disruptive events

As an emergency service we will often receive advance warning of disruptive events that are likely to impact public safety. Where this happens, you will receive updates regarding any changes to work arrangements as necessary. Communication will be facilitated through appropriate channels, including phone, email, intranet, social media, briefings, and media broadcasts as appropriate. All decisions will prioritise the health, safety, and wellbeing of the workforce and service users, recognising our role as an emergency service.

If you experience difficulties reporting for work due to a disruptive event, inform your manager as soon as possible. They will consider the event, the options available, provide instruction and detail any entitlements you may have.

Where the cause of disruption continues, stay in regular contact with your manager and consider all alternatives to report for work as necessary.

### Business continuity plans

Police Scotland is required to put in place a [Business Continuity Management System](https://spi.spnet.local/policescotland/org-support/bcm#intro) to ensure continued delivery of essential services in the event of disruption. All critical functions should have a business continuity plan that considers how they will manage disruption.

In scenarios where the function, building, or location that you work must close, business continuity plans will be enacted. You may be supplied with equipment or materials to work remotely or asked to work at an alternative location. Factors considered will include your personal circumstances, your role, distance from home to any alternative work location, and any necessary equipment or resources required to allow you to work.

SPA have their own guidelines in place for business continuity.

### Approved absence or lateness

Where you make every effort to report for work on time, but are delayed due to disruption, you should be paid as normal. This includes anyone working in a hybrid capacity that is unable to start work due to unexpected disruption to utilities such as electricity or Wi-Fi. In these circumstances a hybrid worker must report to their usual workplace, or a suitable alternative workplace as soon as possible.

Planned disruption of utility services that affect your ability to report for work on time must be covered by authorised absence. A hybrid worker should report to their usual workplace, or a suitable alternative workplace during planned disruption to avoid any deduction to pay or leave.

Where a manager tells you to stop work early because of a disruptive event, you will be paid as normal, and no deduction will be made to flexi-time or time off in lieu (TOIL) balances.

If you independently choose to start late or leave early due to predicted disruption, then you must use flexi-time, TOIL or leave to cover the period.

SCoPE and Flexi-time records should be updated to show any absence.

### Opting not to report for work

If you decide not to report for work, you are expected to account for your absence by speaking to your manager before your scheduled start time and:

* Use TOIL or flexi-time to cover the period of absence;
* Make an application for leave;
* Agree to make up the time later; or
* Take unpaid leave.

Unpaid leave must be requested using the Special Leave Request Form (089-001).

## Manager

### What you need to do:

* Acknowledge any genuine fears that staff might have during disruption.
* Devise measures to limit the impact of known disruption.
* Take reasonable steps to minimise the disruption’s effect on critical services.
* Perform dynamic risk assessments for your team's ability to report for work.
* Take actions to eliminate or reduce identified risks.
* Ensure you are comfortable with the business continuity arrangements for your department.
* Escalate concerns to management as needed.
* Ensure appropriate application of adjustments to pay, leave, flexi, or TOIL.

### Disruptive events

While staff are expected to report for work whenever it is reasonably possible, challenges can arise, particularly during periods of disruption. You must not advise team member on whether it is safe for them to report for work or insist they do so. It is everyone’s responsibility to assess their own risks when considering personal safety and well-being. If a team member believes travel is unsafe or severely affected, you should approve alternative arrangements for work such as reporting to an alternative location, working from home or authorise some form of absence. Factors such as personal circumstances, role, distance, equipment needs, safety, and impact will be relevant.

### Business continuity plans

Police Scotland is required to ensure continued delivery of essential services in the event of disruption. To this end, robust Business Continuity Plans are in place to ensure that our operations can be swiftly adapted to ensure services to the public are maintained and that our teams are kept up to date as situations evolve.

The scale and impact of disruption can affect the response which may involve the creation of strategic, tactical, and operational groups (Gold, Silver, and Bronze) which are centrally organised.

Keeping your people updated as necessary allows them to contribute effectively to the organisation’s response. Each team members circumstances will be unique, as will their specific needs. You should familiarise yourself with the terms and conditions of employment to ensure you can answer questions on staff entitlements, including leave, pay and allowances, ensuring these are appropriately addressed.

You can get advice on people matters from People Direct.

SPA have their own guidelines in place for business continuity.

### Approved absence or lateness

If a team member has made every effort to attend work on time but is delayed due to disruption, they should be paid as normal and not deducted time from flexi, TOIL or Leave balances. This includes anyone working in a hybrid capacity that is unable to start work due to unexpected disruption to utility supplies such as electricity or Wi-Fi. In circumstances where supplies are not likely to be restored within the hour they should report to their usual workplace, or a suitable alternative workplace that allows them to work. Planned disruption of utility services or prolonged disturbance that affects their ability to report for work must be covered by authorised absence and relevant deductions being made.

In circumstances where you tell team members to stop work early because of a disruptive event, they should be paid as normal and no deductions made to flexi-time, TOIL or leave balances. Where staff cannot return home due to the impact of a disruptive event (for example, severe weather), they may be entitled to claim subsistence or incidental expenses, with your approval.

Bookings for overnight accommodation in the rare occasion where it is necessary must be made through the [Travel and Accommodation Unit](https://spi.spnet.local/policescotland/workinghere/travel).

### Non-attendance

Team members choosing not to report for work, are expected to contact you in advance and account for their absence by:

* Using TOIL or flexi-time.
* Taking annual leave.
* Making up time later; or
* Taking unpaid leave.

Staff can convert annual leave to flexi-time if they have no flexi balance.

Unpaid leave must be applied for by using the Special Leave Request Form (089-001) and be recorded on the duty roster.

## Resources

### Forms

* Unpaid Special Leave Request Form – Staff (089-001)

### Related Procedures

* Allowances and Expenses (Staff)
* Disability in Employment
* Pay
* Special Leave
* Flexi-time (Staff)

### Useful Links

* Business Continuity Management System
* Risk Assessment Guidance
* [Travel](https://spi.spnet.local/policescotland/workinghere/travel)

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**Feedback**

All People Policies and Procedures are subject to regular reviews. It is important that user feedback is considered when documents are reviewed.

If anyone wants to provide comment, or make suggestions for improvements to this or any associated document, please email **[redacted].**

Appendix A

Frequently asked questions

**Can I claim expenses for travel to work if my regular travel arrangements are disrupted?**

No, you cannot claim additional expenses incurred as part of your normal journey to work. You may be entitled to claim expenses if you need to travel as part of your duties or to a temporary place of work.

**If I have travelled to a temporary place of work and cannot now get home what are my entitlements?**

In circumstances where you cannot get home it may be appropriate to arrange alternative travel and or overnight accommodation. This must be authorised by your manager and arrangements made through the Travel and Accommodation Unit.

**Can I be asked to work at a different location?**

Yes, the organisation is committed to protecting the health and safety of all of its employees, it must ensure that disruption caused to its services remains minimal. As such, you may be asked to work from a temporary location.

If you are asked to move to another location you will be entitled to claim for any additional travel expenses over and above your normal commute, where applicable.

**What if Reasonable Adjustments at an alternative working place cannot be accommodated or transferred to at short notice?**

​​In the majority of cases, implementing Reasonable Adjustments can be done quickly and involves little or no cost. These will be managed at on a case by case basis based on your individual needs. Depending on how long a modification could take, consideration will be given to interim arrangements which should be discussed between you and your manager.

**What steps would be taken during a period of disruption to keep my place of work safe?**

Our aim is to keep access to all of our buildings safe, where possible. This might include providing a physical security presence, clearing paths, applying grit etc. General information will be communicated to staff and service users about personal safety and any steps that have been put in place to deal with any disruption.

**What if I cannot make contact with my line manager?**

If you cannot get in touch with your line manager, you should contact the next level of management.

**What if there is travel disruption whilst I am abroad that prevents me from attending work?**

If you are unable to attend work, you could use TOIL or flexi-time to cover the period of absence; make an application for further leave; agree to make up the time later; or take unpaid leave.