

# Major Disruption to Travel

**This document outlines the Scottish Prison Service Policy in relation to Major Disruption to Travel**

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**Unlocking Potential - Transforming Lives.**



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**Directorate Owners:**

**Corporate Services**

**Policy Scope:**

**All SPS employees**

**Links to Other Policies:**

**[Special Leave](#)**

**Approved by:**

**Head of Human Resources**

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## 1.0 Introduction

This policy and accompanying guidance sets out the manner in which the Scottish Prison Service (SPS) will respond to major disruption to travel.

This policy and accompanying guidance documents will replace the Major Disruption to Travel Guidance issued in 2012.

## 2.0 Aim

The aim of the SPS Major Disruption to Travel Policy is to ensure that all SPS employees are treated fairly and equitably in circumstances whereby major disruption to travel impacts either the ability to attend work, or means that employees do not work their contracted hours due to major disruption to travel.

## 3.0 Policy Statement

The SPS recognises the requirement to continue services during adverse weather conditions, or other exceptional circumstances causing disruption to travel, whilst not requiring employees to place themselves at undue risk in attending work.

This document provides the SPS Policy on how situations involving major disruption to travel should be handled. Guidance is also provided separately to ensure that Line Managers are equipped to fairly and consistently apply this policy, taking into account the particular circumstances faced at the time.

The SPS Trade Union Side (TUS) has been fully consulted in developing this Policy.

The Policy becomes effective from 31 March 2016 and replaces all earlier related guidance or policy documents on the subject.

It is for the senior manager at an establishment or business area to determine whether the circumstances are such that this policy should apply in their own area of responsibility on any particular occasion.

## 4.0 Scope

This policy and procedure has been developed by management and the TUS working in Partnership. This policy applies to all SPS employees, regardless of the nature of their contract of employment.

This policy and procedure covers the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. It also draws on examples of good practice external to the prison service. The policy is also compliant with the Data Protection Act 1998.

The Policy applies to major disruption to travel caused by events such as national transport strikes, extreme weather conditions, natural disasters or major incidents, such as the closure of major road or rail links, which seriously inhibit national transport.

The Policy does not apply to minor disruption to travel caused, for example, by road works, localised delays or cancellations on public transport.

This Policy does not apply to situations whereby inability to attend work is not wholly due to major disruption to travel; this includes late return from foreign holidays caused by exceptional circumstances not related to major disruption to domestic travel (e.g. industrial action abroad leading to delayed or cancelled flights), and incidences where employees choose not to take public transport which was available to them.

## 5.0 Roles and Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of all employees to make provisions for known major disruption to travel, such as when severe weather is forecast. Employees are also responsible for making Line Managers aware at the earliest opportunity of major disruption to travel which might impact their ability to attend for work.

Line Managers have a responsibility to consider the impact of major disruption to travel to ensure the continued functionality of the organisation, whilst ensuring the health and safety of employees and prisoners.

## 6.0 Attending Work during Periods of Major Disruption to Travel

### 6.1 Making Arrangements to Attend Normal Place of Work

The SPS recognises that the commitment and dedication of our employees means that they will make every reasonable effort to attend for work. In an operational service such as the SPS, this is of course an essential requirement. However, employees should not put themselves at undue risk in order to attend work.

Employees who live in locations that are forecast to be affected by adverse weather should be aware of the potential difficulties they may face, and should be prepared to make reasonable arrangements to attend work.

Where major disruption to travel, such as severe weather or industrial action severely disrupting public transport, is known about in advance employees should make plans to use alternative ways of travelling to their normal place of work.

### 6.2 Employee Reporting Arrangements

If, despite their best efforts, it is not possible for an employee to get to their normal place of work, or they expect to arrive late, they should contact their Line Manager or other designated person to report this as early as reasonably practicable.

For Operational / establishment based employees, if there is no appropriate manager available to take their call, the employee must inform the Gate Officer of their situation; all other employees may leave a voicemail message. In all cases the employee must provide a contact telephone number.

### 6.3 Alternative Working Arrangements

If the employee is unable to make the normal journey to work to their home establishment, alternative working arrangements must be considered. This will differ for Operational/ Establishment based employees, and those based out with establishments:

- **Establishment based Employees:**

If it is possible for the employee to travel without undue risk to an SPS establishment that is not their home establishment, the employee's Line Manager (or nominee) should be contacted in advance to discuss whether attendance at an alternative establishment is appropriate.

The Line Manager (or nominee) will then contact the alternative establishment to check that additional staffing is required before confirming with the employee whether this is appropriate.

In such circumstances, a credit for a full shift or for actual hours worked, whichever is the greater, will be given.

- **Non Establishment based Employees:**

If it is possible for an employee to work productively from another SPS work location, and it is possible for the employee to travel there without undue risk, then it is expected that they will 'hot desk' from the alternative work location.

The appropriate Line Manager (or nominee) should contact the alternative location to confirm that there are work stations available for the employee to work from.

It may be possible in some cases for employees to work productively from home. In this case, they should contact their Line Manager (or nominee) to discuss their request.

## 7.0 Leaving Work Early due to Major Disruption to Travel

### 7.1 Responsibility of Senior Management

Where adverse weather is forecast or has occurred, or whether other circumstances are causing major disruption to travel, the situation will be kept under review by the most senior manager on site and information will be shared with Line Managers.

If it is considered appropriate, Line Managers may be given discretion to allow employees to leave early, this is subject to maintaining safe working within the establishment / work location.

### 7.2 Where Attendance at Work Has Not Occurred

Where an employee has not attended work in accordance with any of the arrangements in Section 6 above, it will be necessary to determine how the resultant time will be accounted for. It is important that Line Managers ask appropriate questions to ensure they have all the information they need to be able to make a fair decision as to whether attendance at work has been wholly attributable to major disruption to travel, and whether this Policy, is appropriate. Guidance is available separately.

## 7.3 Time Credits

Where it has been established by the SPS that an employee has been unable to attend work wholly as a result of major disruption to travel then the time should be fully credited as if the employee had attended as expected.

Where employees arrive late or are allowed to leave work early wholly because of major disruption to travel, then the time should be fully credited as if the employee had attended as expected.

Where any credit for time has been given, then the relevant form ('Major Disruption to Travel Recording Form') must be completed by the appropriate Line Manager and then approved by the Governor, Director or nominee and the hours credited to the employee as appropriate.

## 7.4 Where It Is Not Appropriate To Give Time Credit

Where circumstances are such that the Line Manager believes that the SPS should **not** credit the time off, then the time can be accounted for through one of the following – in consultation with the local HR department:

- Deduction from annual leave entitlement, flexible working hours balance or Time Off in Lieu (TOIL) balance.
- In exceptional circumstances, Special Leave without pay (e.g. where the employee has no annual leave left in the leave year and no TOIL or flexible working hours credit accumulated and will not have the opportunity to make up the hours).

## 7.5 Record Keeping

Requests for working hours to be amended as a result of major disruption to travel will be kept, in line with the Data Protection Act 1998, by the local HR department on the employee's career file in line with the SPS' HR Data retention guidelines.

## Further Information:

The SPS recognises that from time to time employees may have questions or concerns relating to this policy. In certain situations employees' rights and obligations regarding this policy may change. In these circumstances the SPS will abide by any statutory obligations.

The SPS wishes to encourage open discussion with employees to ensure that questions and problems can be resolved as quickly as possible. Employees are encouraged to seek clarification on any issues with the appropriate Line Manager in the first instance.

## Sustainability

Improving our environmental performance and doing things in a more sustainable way should be seen as integral to our core business practices.

In line with the SPS Sustainable Policy and to demonstrate compliance with the Scottish Government's commitment to improving environmental and sustainable development performance, please be mindful if printing this document – keeping paper usage to a minimum (print only version), printing on both sides, and recycling.

## Equality Statement

The SPS is an equal opportunities employer where all employees are treated with dignity and respect. We are fully committed to equality, diversity and human rights and to ensuring our culture, working environment, policies, processes and practices are free from bias. This policy applies to all employees regardless of protected characteristics, and, subject to any eligibility criteria, length of service, grade, working pattern or operational status.

## Inclusive Communications

It is our ambition to ensure that SPS documents are readable, accessible and engaging for staff.

In formatting this document, good practice principles around engagement and inclusive communications have been adhered to.

If you require this document in an alternative format please contact Human Resources.

## Review and Monitoring

This policy will be reviewed every three years or sooner where applicable to reflect changing business and legislative requirements.

## Human Resources Policy and Guidance in SPS

SPS policies take into account current legislation, rules, regulations and best practice guidance from a range of professional and public bodies, including the following:



UK Civil  
Service  
Management  
Code



UK Legislation



EU  
Legislation



ACAS



CIPD Best  
Practice