



## Severe Weather Policy

### Aim

The decision to restrict or close a market can cause a lot of disruption with the potential for financial and logistical impacts for all concerned and therefore is never taken lightly.

However, our key priority is always to protect the public, traders, and staff safety in the event of any severe weather which would affect any open-air market or event operated by South Holland District Council.

This policy **may** apply in the following circumstances:

- a) a weather warning is in force and has been issued by the Met Office or,
- b) in the opinion of the Markets Team there is a risk to safety due to adverse weather conditions.

### Objectives

The objectives are:

1. To comply with the Council's duties and obligations to its staff, traders, and members of the public under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.
2. To comply with the Council's common law duties under the Occupiers Liability Act 1984.
3. To comply with the Council's insurers.
4. To ensure any decision to close, cancel or restrict a market is taken fairly, consistently, and transparently and is communicated to all parties as soon as practicable.

## Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
Assistant Director for Leisure & Local Services Division (ADLLS)	Reviews and approvals of this policy as required.
Market Manager (MM)	Make the decision to implement this policy. If the MM is not available, the Market Officer (MO) will be responsible for making the decision. Discretion will be used by the MM to waive or reduce fees. Make note of the decision to cancel a market.
Markets Officer (MO)	Make the decision to activate the policy in the absence of the MM. Aims to remain available at all times until the infrastructure is taken down, or the weather warning is downgraded.
Staff	Any staff that are deployed to help when the policy is activated are to follow instructions and not place themselves in any personal danger.
Health and Safety Team	Advice on the policy and during any live situations, if required.
Communications Team	Provides effective and timely public communications during any live situation, if required.

A severe weather warning may not be considered a reason to cancel or restrict the market. The management team will actively review advance weather warnings from the Met Office.

In deciding whether the market can go ahead in a restricted capacity, or cancelled completely, the Markets Team shall use their judgement and experience together with the following:

- Predicted and/or current weather conditions.
- Weather and risk table.
- Availability of staff.
- Economic factors.
- Insight – Previous occurrences.

There are 2 key factors to be considered, as follows:

1. The infrastructure, e.g. market equipment, can be erected safely and remain safe throughout the duration of its erection.
2. That there is sufficient staff readily available at all times throughout the market to dismantle any infrastructure should the weather deteriorate whilst the market equipment is erected.

In circumstances where the weather has deteriorated and the market is cancelled, the Market Officer aims to remain on site until the infrastructure is taken down if available, or the weather has improved to a safe state.

Once a decision has been made, traders will be immediately advised through a variety of methods including but not exclusive to, social media, text or email.

### **Activating the policy**

- If wind gusts are predicted to be between 36-39mph anytime between gazebo erection, throughout core trading hours and up until gazebo dismantling, the Markets Team may decide to restrict the market. They may do so by allowing gazebos, but the use of sides and covers to be strictly monitored on a regular basis by the traders and Market Officer. If the Market Officer deems there to be a significant risk to health and safety, he may instruct traders to remove all sides/covers immediately.
- If wind gusts are predicted to be over 39mph anytime between gazebo erection, throughout core trading hours and up until gazebo dismantling, the Markets Team may restrict the market by not allowing any gazebos, and instead, allowing traders to trade from their vans and approved stands/trestles/other pre-approved methods. Depending on the severity of the wind, the Markets Team may decide to cancel the market.
- When a restricted market is declared, the following conditions shall be adhered too:
  - Heavy duty tables/boards/grid paneling will be allowed, please seek approval from the Markets Officer.
  - When setting up or taking down, tables and boards must be weighed down, if not possible, they must be laid flat on the floor.
  - No Danish style trolleys allowed.
  - The maximum height of any stacked crates/boxes used must not exceed 76cm.
  - When using any equipment, traders to ensure they're appropriately supervising their equipment at all times, particularly when setting up and taking down.
- If a restricted market is declared by the Markets Team the day before the market,

and the weather unexpectedly improves overnight resulting in predicted reasonable weather conditions during core trading hours, those traders with their own stalls/gazebos/equipment may be allowed to use them as usual with the Market Teams approval. The assessment for such decisions will be made on the morning of the market, prior to 8am, utilising the Met Office Weather app. No traders shall start erecting any equipment until the decision has been made.

- Where trading has already commenced and the Council considers it appropriate to stop trading, they shall notify the traders accordingly and supervise the removal of all goods, equipment and vehicles from the Market Place.
- Where a market is cancelled, due to adverse weather, the Council's decision will be deemed final, and all traders will be required to cease trading and vacate the Market Place immediately
- In the case of a restricted market, and if a trader is to use their own stall/gazebo/equipment, they must have a risk assessment for such equipment in severe weather and shall provide it to the Markets Team upon request.
- The Markets Team will aim to assess the upcoming weather via the Met Office website/app to maintain a consistent approach, no later than **midday**, the day before the market. If a market is restricted after review, traders will be notified by email or direct contact from the Markets Team.

### **ABSENCE FROM THE MARKET ON INCLEMENT WEATHER DAYS**

- Traders are assumed to be occupying their gazebo/pitch unless they have cancelled their booking or booked a non-attendance day (regular traders), both of which are required to be done by **2pm** the day before the market.

### **FEE'S**

- In the case of the market being cancelled prior to the market day, traders who have paid their fee will be provided a discount code for a free market to be used on a future date. All fees are non-refundable.
- In the event a market is cancelled by the Council during a market day, and if trading ceases before 1200 on that day, traders will be provided a discount code for a free market to be used on a future date.
- In the event that the market is open, and the trader is standing and wishes to no longer trade due to inclement weather 'in their opinion', they may leave the market with the permission of the Markets Team. Traders who choose to leave the market early due to inclement weather of their own decision will not receive any discount codes for future markets.
- In the case where the Markets Team has **restricted** the market, the trader will have a **choice not to stand** without penalty. Traders who have already paid will

receive a discount code for a future market.

- Traders **must strictly** adhere to the following:
  - The trader must notify the Markets Team **via** email [Markets@SHolland.gov.uk](mailto:Markets@SHolland.gov.uk) that they will not be standing on the **restricted** market, by **1pm the day before the market or contact the Markets Officer**.
- If a regular trader doesn't wish to stand on a **restricted market** and has already paid for their booking, we will issue a discount code for a free market to be used at a future market, all fees are non-refundable.
- If a regular trader hasn't paid for their reservation and doesn't wish to stand on a restricted market, they must book a non-attendance day by 2pm the day before the market. The Markets Team will then add an additional non-attendance day to their balance. The trader must still email the Markets Team before **1pm** to inform them that they will not be standing on the restricted market.

### **RISK ASSESSMENTS**

- Traders that use their own market equipment must have a detailed risk assessment for inclement weather conditions and sufficient staff take action if circumstances arise. This risk assessment must be made available to the Markets Team immediately, upon request. Traders that can't provide such documentation maybe asked to dismantle the equipment.
- A risk assessment will not automatically allow traders to use their equipment in severe weather conditions, it will be the Markets Team decision, depending on the severity of the weather, on what will be allowed. If private stalls/gazebo's are permitted, the trader must ensure correct weights are used at all times and must complete regular safety checks on their equipment, as per their risk assessment. In windy conditions, gazebo's must be double weighted on each leg.

## Decision Making Framework

Are sufficient staff available?	Weather Conditions		
	Good but deteriorating later in the day	Bad but improving later in the day	Bad and worsening
<b>Yes</b>	Hold the market if the time available to trade is acceptable. Put certain restrictions in place if required.	If possible, set out the basic infrastructure but leave sheets/sides off until it is safe to add. Put certain restrictions in place if required.	Consider restricting or cancelling the market.
<b>No</b>	Restrict or cancel the market.	Restrict or cancel the market.	Restrict or cancel the market.

## SEVERE WEATHER TABLE AND RISKS

Met Office Terminology	Definition	Risk – who may be harmed and how	Controls and Actions
Heavy snow	Snow falling at a rate of approx. 2cm per hour or more, expected for at least 2 hours.	Slips, trips, and falls from unsafe or icy ground. Manual handling injuries from attempting to set up infrastructure in icy/snowy conditions. Impact injuries	Check weather forecasts before market. Cancel or restrict market according to forecast. Ensure operatives/staff are on standby if forecast is uncertain. Monitor travel information around the Town Centre. In the case of lighter conditions, ensure gritting of the main roads/streets and pedestrian areas. If a thaw is forecast, consider if there is sufficient safe ground to host the market.
Blizzards/ Drifting snow	Moderate or heavy snow with winds of 30mph or reduced visibility to 200 metres or less or drifting snow causing similar Conditions.	from vehicles (including market vehicles) attempting to manoeuvre on icy or snowy surfaces and poor visibility. Increase in vehicle accidents on the highway, main roads and streets around the Town Centre if traders and customers try	
Very heavy snowfall	Expected to give depths of 15cm or more with potential to result in widespread disruption in communications. Blizzards are severe with visibility reduced to near zero	to attend the market.	
Freezing rain	Rain freezes on contact with road surfaces		

Very windy	Gusts above 35mph	Impact/crush injuries from flying debris/traders goods, moving stalls/gazebo's and collapse of stalls/gazebo's. Bruising, cuts and lacerations resulting from above incidents.	Check weather forecast before market. Cancel or restrict market according to forecast. If possible, ensure operatives/ staff are on standby if forecast is uncertain. Monitor weather and circumstances throughout the market.
Heavy Rain	Expected to persist for at least 2 hours and to give at least 15mm within a 3-hour period or a period of rainfall of sufficient intensity to cause flooding on already saturated ground (includes melting snow) e.g. around 25mm per day.	Flash flooding of urban areas and main roads/streets around the Town Centre impeding the access of emergency services and causing traffic management difficulties. Collapse of market canopies/sheeting/gazebos.	Monitor weather and circumstances in advance of the market. Flooding would be a risk if the ground area was already at saturation points. Consider an early finish if flooding seems to be likely. Traders encouraged and requested to ensure that water is not allowed to build up on top of stalls/gazebo's.
Dense fog	Visibility less than 50 metres.	Increased risk of vehicle accidents on the main entry roads/streets around the Town Centre. Increased time spent in traffic tailbacks. Increased risk of accidents, particularly with market vehicles, leading to crush/impact injuries.	Monitor weather and circumstances throughout the market. Consider an early finish in daylight if fog persists. Consider staffing levels.