

WEST LIMERICK INDEPENDENT LIVING CLG

Weather Policy

Policy Reference	WLILP44
Category	Operational Policies — Health & Safety, Continuity of Care
Version	2.0 (legislative framework and cross-references added)
Status	APPROVED — by the Board of Directors on 9 October 2026
Supersedes	WLILP44 - Weather Policy
Policy Owner	Board of Directors, West Limerick Independent Living CLG
Applies To	All WLIL staff who travel to service users' homes as part of their duties
Related Policies	WLILP7D - Data Retention, Rectification and Erasure Policy; WLILP19 - Lone Working Policy; WLILP25 - Crisis Management Policy and Response Procedure; WLILP30 - Incident Management & Reporting Policy; WLILP33 - Transport and Vehicle Use Policy
Review Cycle	Annually, or sooner following a significant weather event

Purpose

To ensure the safety of staff and clients during adverse weather conditions while maintaining continuity of service wherever possible. This policy sets out WLIL's severe-weather-specific procedures, operating as a detailed annex to WLILP25 - Crisis Management Policy and Response Procedure, which severe weather is a defined crisis type under.

Legislative and Regulatory Framework

- Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 — an employer's duty of care includes not expecting staff to travel where doing so would put their health or safety at risk
- HIQA Draft National Standards for Home Support Services (2024)
- Road Traffic Acts 1961 to 2025, as subsequently amended — see WLILP33 - Transport and Vehicle Use Policy

1. Risk Assessment

- Before travelling to a client's home, staff must assess the weather conditions, including temperature, precipitation, and road safety. If conditions are deemed unsafe, staff should refrain from travelling
- Clients should also be encouraged to assess their own environment (for example snow and ice conditions around the house) and report any hazards to the Coordinators

2. Communication

- In the event of adverse weather, clients and staff should stay in regular communication. If a staff member is unable to reach a client due to weather conditions, they should inform their Coordinator and make alternative arrangements if possible
- Coordinators should remain in contact with staff to assess their safety and determine if services can be safely provided

3. Travel Guidelines

- If conditions worsen overnight (for example snow, ice, or wind), staff should consider delaying travel to the client's home until roads are clear or safe
- Staff should not be expected to travel if conditions are unsafe or there is a risk to their health or safety
- Vehicle checks and preparation for adverse weather (for example tyre condition, an emergency kit) follow WLILP33 - Transport and Vehicle Use Policy

4. Health and Safety

- If a staff member is delayed, stranded, or involved in an incident while travelling in adverse weather, they should contact their Coordinator as soon as it is safe to do so
- Where a staff member is travelling alone to a dispersed or rural client in adverse weather, this should be treated as an elevated lone working risk under WLILP19 - Lone Working Policy, not only an ordinary journey
- In a genuine emergency (for example a road traffic accident, or being stranded in dangerous conditions), staff should contact emergency services first, then their Coordinator

5. Client Welfare

- The health and safety of the client must always come first. If services cannot be provided, staff should notify their Coordinator immediately, so that the client has access to any necessary support
- Where possible, services should be rescheduled, or alternative arrangements (for example support from a nursing home or respite service) should be arranged

6. Reporting

- Any instance of unsafe travel, a cancelled visit, or an incident during travel due to weather must be recorded using the SBAR incident report form in WLILP30 - Incident Management & Reporting Policy, Appendix 3, rather than a separate weather-specific form
- Weather-related disruptions should be reviewed regularly by management to identify patterns and adjust planning as necessary

7. Flexibility and Compassion

- Staff should be encouraged to exercise flexibility in providing support to clients when possible, considering factors such as their individual needs and safety risks
- Management will support staff by providing clear guidance on when services are to be suspended, and by addressing any concerns that arise from weather-related disruptions

8. Records Retention

Weather-related incident reports and disruption logs generated under this policy are retained in accordance with WLILP7D - Data Retention, Rectification and Erasure Policy, which is the single authoritative source for WLIL's retention periods.

9. Review

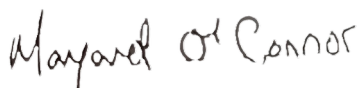
This policy should be reviewed annually, or sooner following a significant weather event, and updated to reflect changes in weather patterns, road safety protocols, and health and safety regulations.

This policy reflects the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 and HIQA's Draft National Standards for Home Support Services (2024), checked as accurate as of drafting. It is not a substitute for legal or health and safety advice.

Approval

Approved by the Board of West Limerick Independent Living CLG on 9 October 2026.

Signed on behalf of the Board, on its instruction, by the General Manager:



Margaret O'Brien O'Connor, General Manager

Date signed: 09-10-2026