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| <i>Policy &amp; Procedure:</i> | <b>INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY</b> |                       |              |
| <i>Performed by:</i>           | Manger of Volunteer Services    |                       |              |
| <i>Approved by:</i>            | SLT                             |                       |              |
| <i>Date Approved:</i>          | December 15, 2014               | <i>Date Reviewed:</i> | Feb 12, 2019 |
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**Purpose:** To ensure the safety of Hospice Care Ottawa (HCO) clients, volunteers, and staff<sup>1</sup> during periods of Inclement Weather<sup>2</sup>.

**Policy:** HCO shall appoint the Ottawa Student Transportation Authority as its agent with respect to decisions of transportation cancellation. When the Ottawa Student Transportation Authority deems the road conditions unsafe for the transportation of students within the Ottawa area, HCO will cancel all Community Programs where transportation by staff, clients and volunteers is involved.

**Background:** With the creation of HCO came a review of best practices regarding Inclement Weather. Hospice Care Ottawa is part of a larger coalition of Community Support Agencies in the Ottawa area, most of whom have implemented similar cancellation practices regarding inclement weather. The policy, to follow the Ottawa Student Transportation Authority school bus cancellations, ensures that a minimum number of staff, volunteers, and clients are out on the road during dangerous road conditions.

**Principles:**

- ✿ This procedure is put into effect when inclement weather occurs which would jeopardize safety of volunteers and clients travelling on roads.
- ✿ Staff, volunteers, clients and family members are encouraged to be aware of present and future weather conditions in their area.
- ✿ Community Hospice Care Coordinators, volunteers, clients and family members hold the right to cancel a ride at any time due to inclement weather.
- ✿ If school bus transportation is cancelled in the Ottawa area then HCO Community Programs, all transportation related to them as well as meetings and events will be cancelled automatically.
- ✿ Even though road conditions may improve quickly, the driveways and sidewalks in the area can remain hazardous for a longer period of time. Management will consider this before reinstating transportation after a cancellation due to inclement weather.

**Procedure:**

- ✿ In inclement weather, it is the responsibility of the staff and volunteers to listen to the radio or look online to check if the buses in the area are cancelled before heading out to HCO programs and services. If buses are cancelled, then all HCO Community Programs and services will be cancelled. All volunteers whose roles are involved with Community Programs are encouraged to stay home and call into their Community Hospice Care Coordinator or Coordinator of Volunteer Service if they have concerns or questions.
- ✿ Community Hospice Care Coordinators should be aware of the next day's weather forecast. If the forecast is calling for inclement weather, staff should be prepared to cancel Community Programs and have available necessary contact information to cancel clients and volunteers.
- ✿ On days when transportation is cancelled, the Community Hospice Care Coordinator will attempt to call all scheduled Volunteer Transportation Drivers and clients to ensure that they are aware that the drive is cancelled. Day Hospice volunteers would also be contacted re the cancellation. When appropriate, the Community Hospice Care Coordinator will ask the client whether the cancelled ride should be rescheduled for another date.

<sup>1</sup> During inclement weather, scheduled staff are expected to work, unless otherwise notified.

<sup>2</sup> Inclement weather is defined as intense, adverse weather conditions such as heavy snow, ice, rain or fog; excessive heat, humidity or wind; or other similar weather conditions that create a significant risk to client/driver health and safety.



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- ✦ For forecasted inclement weather on weekends, HCO’s Senior Leadership Team and the Community Hospice Care Coordinator would monitor this possibility during the week. On Friday afternoon, Community Hospice Care Coordinators would consultation with the Executive Director to make a decision regarding weekend programming. The Community Hospice Care Coordinators would notify the affected volunteers and clients regarding the decision to cancel. Weekend programs that could be affected are in-home volunteer visits, bereavement walks and transportation to medical appointments.
- ✦ If a client has an essential appointment scheduled, the client or driver must alert the Community Hospice Care Coordinator or Coordinator of Volunteer Services as soon as possible. HCO’s Executive Director will make a decision whether to provide transportation or not. In the case where Hospice Care Ottawa would not provide the ride, the client could make their own arrangements with a taxi company.

**Definition:** **Community Programs** are programs that support clients who live within our community and not in our Hospice Residence. Programs include:

- Day Hospice
- Bereavement Support
- In Home Support Program
- Caregiver Support Program
- Meetings and Workshops
- Other non-urgent hospice activities

**References:** [www.ottawaschoolbus.ca](http://www.ottawaschoolbus.ca) provides updates on school bus cancellations in the Ottawa area for the Ottawa Carleton School Board and the Ottawa Catholic School Board.

Information for drive destinations outside of Ottawa is available at [www.steo.ca](http://www.steo.ca)

Local radio stations provide bus cancellation updates every 15 minutes starting at 6:15am on an inclement weather day.

**Important Note re Residential Programs & Reception Support:**

HCO’s Residential Program and reception support at May Court Hospice and Ruddy-Shenkman Hospice will remain open during inclement weather. Residents’ safety and wellbeing relies heavily on staff and volunteers attending their shift. Staff and volunteers who have shifts at the residences or reception are encouraged to attend their shift. If they feel it is unsafe to travel to either location, volunteers and staff are to contact designated staff as follows:

Regular business hours: Volunteers contact their Coordinator of Volunteer Services. Staff contact the on call nurse at 613-422-4974

After Hours (evenings and weekends): Staff and Volunteers contact the on call nurse at 613-422-4974.