



LICHFIELD CITY COUNCIL MARKETS

SEVERE WEATHER POLICY

Severe Weather Policy

Any third party operating a market or event on the square should be issued with and adhere to this policy.

Aim

The decision to close or curtail 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 Lichfield City Council.

This policy should apply in the following circumstances

- a) a severe weather warning is in force and has been issued by the Met Office.
- OR
- b) in the opinion of the Markets Officer there is a risk to public 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 or curtail a market is taken fairly, consistently, and transparently and is communicated to all parties as soon as a decision is made
- 5. In order to help the Markets Officer to make informed and effective decisions, a weather diary will be kept building insight of the conditions that can seriously disrupt a market or event.

Roles and Responsibilities

Town Clerk/Deputy Town Clerk	Reviews and approves this policy as required. Discretion to waive or reduce stall fees.
Markets Officer (MO)	Ensures emergency contact numbers and weather risk table are all up to date. See Appendix 1 and 3. Makes the decision to activate this policy in the absence of the Town Clerk/Deputy Town Clerk. Stays on site at all times until all stalls are dismantled or the weather warning is downgraded. Removes all counter boards from empty stalls, stack boards together in small piles with rope for additional safety/security. Contact Allfit (stall contractor) to dismantle stalls and take them safely off site. Carries out a review of the decision to cancel a market/event post cancellation.

Activating the Policy

A severe weather warning in itself may not be considered a reason to cancel or curtail the market/event. The management team will actively seek advance weather warning from the Met Office and third-party forecasting services.

In making a decision whether the market/event can go ahead in a reduced capacity or cancelled completely the Town Clerk/Deputy Town Clerk or the Markets Officer (MO), in their absence shall use their judgement and experience together with the following:

- Predicted and/or current weather conditions
- Weather and risk table – see Appendix 1
- Availability of staff/contractors
- Economic factors
- Insight – weather diary from previous occurrences

There are 2 key factors to be considered as follows

1. The infrastructure e.g. stalls/gazebos etc can be erected safely and remain safe throughout the duration of the market/event.
2. That there is sufficient manpower readily available at all times throughout the market/event to dismantle any infrastructure should the weather deteriorate whilst the market/event is taking place.

If the above cannot be guaranteed, consideration needs to be given to cancel the market completely.

If the market/event can still go ahead but at a reduced level priority will be given to those traders who sell perishable goods e.g. butchers/bakery/grocers etc. Fruit and Vegetable stall are allowed to use tables due to the weight of the goods. Alternative options would be no gazebos and no stall sheeting to be used or trading from vehicles only.

The Town Clerk/Deputy Town Clerk or Markets Officer (MO) will endeavour to make a decision as early as possible to cancel the market/event in full or part before any infrastructure is erected, this must be made no later than 4pm on the day before the market/event.

Once a decision has been made Traders will be immediately advised through a variety of methods including but not exclusive

- Social Media e.g. Facebook and Twitter
- Lichfield City Council website
- Text
- Email

In the case of full market cancellation, the Regular Trader will not be charged stall rent.

In the case of a reduced market the Regular Trader will pay normal rent. Non-attendance will incur arrears.

In the case of a reduced market and if the circumstances allow, the Markets Officer has the discretion to allow trading from Traders vehicles ONLY (no gazebos or stalls/sheeting to be erected). Fruit and vegetable stall are allowed to use tables due to the weight of the goods (no umbrellas or sheeting to be erected).

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 a 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.	Check weather forecasts before market/event. Cancel or restrict market/event according to forecast.
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	Impact injuries from vehicles attempting to manoeuvre on icy or snowy surfaces and poor visibility. Increase in vehicle accidents on the highway and main roads and streets around the town centre if Traders and customers try to attend the market/event.	Ensure operatives/staff are on standby if forecast is uncertain. In the case of lighter conditions ensure gritting of the market square is done the night before market or early on the morning before traders arrive. Gritting may need to be redone throughout the day.
Very heavy snowfall/blizzards/drifting snow	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		Market Stall Contractor/Guildhall Premises attendants/Markets Officer will clear walkways of snow on market day and grit market square if necessary.
Freezing rain and widespread icy roads	Rain freezes on contact with road surfaces		If a thaw is forecast, consider if there is sufficient safe ground to host the market/event.
Severe gales/storms	Gusts of 35 mph or more (if traders provide own market stalls/gazebos) Gusts of 45mph or more (pre-erected market stalls)	Impact Crush injuries from flying debris, traders' goods, and collapse of stalls to stalls moving. Cuts and lacerations from debris or stall components or stalls moving.	Check weather forecasts before market/event. Cancel or restrict market/event according to forecast. Ensure operatives/staff are on standby if forecast is uncertain. Monitor weather and circumstances throughout the market/event.

Decision Making Framework

Is the Manpower available?	Weather Conditions		
	Good but deteriorating later in the day	Bad but improving later in the day	Bad and Worsening
Yes	Hold the market/event if the time available to trade is acceptable. Warn market stall Contractor that they could be called in at short notice to dismantle the infrastructure should conditions deteriorate to and unsafe state. Send a text message to all traders the day advising them of the weather forecast. If wind is expected request that those attending should bring additional weights for their stalls. Markets Officer could instruct all traders to remove stall sheeting or dismantle gazebo for safety reasons if weather becomes too severe.	If possible, set out the basic stall infrastructure but leave stall boards off until the trader arrives with their stock to weigh the boards down. Send a text message to all traders the day advising them of the weather forecast. If wind is expected request that those attending should bring additional weights for their stalls. Markets Officer could instruct all traders to remove stall sheeting or dismantle gazebos for safety reasons if weather becomes too severe. Markets Officer may allow Trading from vehicles only (no gazebos or stall sheeting to be used).	Consider cancelling the market.
No	Cancel the market/event.	Cancel the market/event.	Cancel the market/event.
The Markets Officer must stay on site at all times until the infrastructure is taken down or the weather warning is downgraded.			