

Government warning about travel today

You are urged to avoid travel in the areas affected by red and amber warnings for snow which includes Edinburgh and much of the Lothians.

The Met Office has issued a red warning, which is the highest category of alert, covering Glasgow, Edinburgh, much of the Lothians, the northeast Borders, as well as parts of Fife, Perth and Kinross, Forth Valley, North Lanarkshire, Renfrewshire and Dunbartonshire.

The red warning will last from 3pm on Wednesday until 10am tomorrow morning, with amber warnings continuing across much of Scotland throughout this time and into Thursday.



A further meeting of the Scottish Government's Resilience Room (SGoRR) was held today, chaired by the Deputy First Minister and attended by Transport Minister Humza Yousaf, to ensure preparations are in place to deal with the forecast conditions.

The Scottish Government is in contact with local authorities to ensure they are fully informed to advise schools and services in their areas. People are also being urged to check with their transport providers for regular updates on journeys and potential cancellations.

The Met Office red warning states that the impacts could include long delays and cancellations on bus, rail and air travel. Roads may become blocked by deep snow, with many stranded vehicles and passengers. Some rural communities might be cut off for several days. Long interruptions to power supplies and other services such as telephone and mobile phone

networks, could occur.

Frequent and heavy snow showers are expected within these areas, and the police are advising people should avoid non-essential travel.

Employers are being asked to consider being as flexible as possible with their staff, and officials have been in contact with the haulage industry to make their members aware of the conditions.

Transport Minister Humza Yousaf said: "This is the first red warning that has been issued for snow under the current system which means that conditions in affected areas will be extremely treacherous.

"I would urge people to follow police advice and avoid travel in those areas affected by the red and amber warnings. We recognise it will have an impact on people travelling to and from work over the next 24 hours and so I would encourage employers to be as flexible as possible with their staff.

"If you need to travel, your journey is likely to be disrupted and in many instances there may be cancellations, there is the possibility you could be stranded and this could interfere with emergency services and those clearing the roads. I would urge parents to continue to check school notices with their local authorities before making any decisions on travel.

"In these severe conditions I would also encourage people where possible to check in with elderly neighbours or anyone who may be particularly vulnerable.

"Winter maintenance fleets are working 24/7 to treat the trunk road network and will be standing ready to assist motorists if required. We have more gritters available this year than ever before.

"To access the most up to date travel information, you can use

the Traffic Scotland mobile website – my.trafficscotland.org – or the @trafficscotland twitter page. If you're planning to travel by rail, ferry or air, please check with your operator ahead of time. It's inevitable the weather conditions will also impact on other modes of transport."

Chief Superintendent Stewart Carle, head of Police Scotland's Road Policing said:

"Overnight and into this morning Police Scotland and other emergency services have dealt with literally hundreds of incidents on the roads across the country and continue to do so with a number of closures due to stranded HGVs and cars. There's also been considerable disruption to other modes of transport including air and rail.

"The Met Office has now increased the weather warning to Red, the first time this has occurred for snow storms, and so we can't stress enough that all travel should be avoided unless it's essential being absolutely necessary and extremely important. Employers and public services need to carefully consider how that criteria meets their urgent business needs.

"The warning covers the commuter periods both this evening and tomorrow morning, and so we would ask people to think very carefully about making alternative arrangements for these times and to consider whether they really need to make that journey, particularly on the road network which may become overwhelmed as people leave work early to beat the storm. We'd urge employers to be as flexible as possible in terms of their staff perhaps not being able being able to come to their normal places of work and to consider alternatives.

"As far as this afternoon is concerned, we'd ask people to think seriously about how they may be getting home either before or during the time of the Red warning as safely as possible.

"Police Scotland's national Multi Agency Command Centre at

Bilston, is co-ordinating our emergency response across all Local Policing Divisions in Scotland and will continue to do throughout the next 48 hours. Please help us by tuning in to broadcasts and heed the travel and other safety advice to stay safe during this period.”