



**An Roinn Tithíochta, Pleanála  
agus Rialtais Áitiúil**  
Department of Housing, Planning  
and Local Government

## **Statement from the National Emergency Coordination Group on Severe Weather**

### **Key Public Safety & Information Messages**

- Monitor national, local and social media for updates for weather in your area
- Keep supplies of essential medication in case it is difficult to get to the pharmacy
- Have an adequate supply of fuel for heating/cooking and if possible a suitable alternative should the main supply fail
- Have a supply of food and drinking water for a few days in your house
- Have batteries for torches in the event of power cuts
- Make sure mobile phones are charged
- Have emergency contact numbers to hand
- Check on vulnerable neighbours
- Householders and businesses are requested to clear footpaths areas, both inside and outside their premises of snow at an early stage
- Visit [www.winterready.ie](http://www.winterready.ie) for advice on preparedness

### **Report of the National Emergency Coordination Group Meeting**

The National Emergency Coordination Group (NECG) for severe weather met today (27 February 2018) in advance of forecasted snow to coordinate the response to predicted and emerging issues. The meeting was chaired by the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government, in its role as Lead Government Department for the response to severe weather, and Ministers Eoghan Murphy T.D. and Damien English T.D. were in attendance.

While there remains some uncertainty regarding the weather forecast for later in the week, so far events are unfolding as Met Éireann has forecast.

Met Éireann provided a detailed update regarding the current weather situation. An Orange Level weather warning is in place for 15:00hrs Tuesday to 11:00hrs Wednesday for Carlow, Dublin, Kildare, Laois, Louth, Meath and Wicklow for scattered snow showers leading to accumulations by Wednesday morning in Leinster and East Munster. There is also a high possibility of thunder and lightning.

Further snow showers are predicted for Wednesday with the heaviest and most frequent in the east, with some showers reaching the midlands and western areas over the course of the day, with significant wind chill.

Scattered snow showers will become more frequent on Thursday with the arrival of Storm Emma, accompanied by strengthening south easterly winds, reaching gale force along the south and east coasts, potentially causing blizzard conditions.

The public are advised to monitor Met Éireann across all media platforms for further updates and to familiarise themselves with the Be Winter Ready campaign and associated support materials.

At local authority level, local coordination groups and crisis management teams continue to monitor, review and prepare for the current period of severe weather.

The Defence Forces continue on standby with personnel and assets available to provide assistance upon request from civil authorities.

Decisions as to whether it is necessary to close schools will be made locally by boards of management, prioritising children's safety and taking into account relevant local circumstances.

With regard to businesses operating during the current period of severe weather, the decision to close or open will be down to individual employers based on the nature of their business and the local weather conditions, with a view to the continuity of essential services. The safety of employees is a key consideration, and businesses should use the next day or so to plan and consider how to communicate promptly with their employees once the decision to close or open has been reached.

There are a number of supports available from the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection to support households who are not in a position to meet their heating costs as a result of the current severe weather conditions. In addition to the Department's fuel allowance scheme which supports the heating of 338,000 homes for people dependent on social welfare payments, the public can also potentially avail of the Exceptional Needs Payments scheme or the Urgent Needs Payments scheme; information on these supports can be found on the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection's website [www.welfare.ie](http://www.welfare.ie)

Additional capacity to accommodate rough sleepers has been made available in the major urban centres.

The public are advised to monitor transport operators web sites, and social media, for up-to-date information regarding their travel needs. People should take account of local weather conditions when making their travel arrangements.

It was confirmed that the grocery retail distribution network hubs are appropriately geographically placed and there is no threat to the security of food supply posed by poor weather conditions.

The winter ready campaign details key messages which will enable the public to ensure they are sufficiently prepared for severe weather events. In addition to the winter ready website, hard copies of the booklet are available in all libraries and through medical facilities.

Additionally, there a number of further initiatives to disseminate the winter ready messaging, these involve the Public Participation Network, and both Government Organisations and Voluntary Group web sites and social media accounts.

People are advised to continue to monitor national and local media, including social media, over the coming days to keep up to date with information regarding the developing weather situation.