



## PROCEDURE I-1

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### SUBJECT: INCLEMENT WEATHER

Legal Reference: Highway Traffic Act Section 175

Related Reference: Canada`s Wind Chill Index

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**School Closures:** It is the responsibility of each of the Partner School Boards to make the decision to close or not close Schools due to inclement weather/School conditions and/or bus cancellations.

**Regionality:** Inclement weather zones have been developed to standardize/coordinate School Bus service, delays, or Cancellations where possible.

When weather conditions develop that could impact the safety of students, the decision to operate a School Bus route is made by the School Bus Companies.

#### Process

- At the beginning of each School year, the HPSTS General Manager will review with School Principals and designates in each School region the written process developed to coordinate weather delays and cancellation procedures and communication of information impacting those Schools as a result of any decisions to delay and/or cancel School Buses, and subsequent School closures.
- School Principals or designates from each region will act in the capacity of regional coordinator. The coordinator will facilitate the gathering and dissemination of information on behalf of their respective region which includes:
  - a) School Bus Contractor and School Principal communication;
  - b) Decisions related to emergency School closure;
  - c) Reporting these decisions electronically to the regional radio stations, posting the information on the HPSTS website in the prescribed fashion, posting on the School twitter widget, and posting the information in the Weather and/or Event Cancellation conferences in the Partner Boards' internal email client.

## Overall Expectations

- The district experiences a diversity of weather conditions which vary significantly from location to location, and so local decisions are needed;
- 1. Subject to weather conditions, every effort will be made to keep Schools open to serve Students and School Staff who can reach the Schools safely;
- 2. Parents will ensure that students follow reasonable proactive measures such as:
  - a. In cold weather:
    - i. Dressing in layers of warm clothing, with an outer layer that is wind resistant;
    - ii. Covering all exposed skin;
    - iii. Wearing a hat, mittens or insulated gloves, a scarf, neck tube or face mask and insulated, waterproof footwear;
    - iv. Staying dry;
    - v. Keeping active;
  - b. In warm weather:
    - i. Dressing in light, loose fitting clothing;
    - ii. Wearing sunglasses;
    - iii. Wearing a hat;
    - iv. Wearing sunscreen;
- All bus delays will be for TWO (2) hours;
- With respect to wind chill, the guideline for the danger level is -40 degrees Celsius and below, which is noted on Canada's Wind Chill Index as Very High Risk and exposed flesh can freeze in 5 to 10 minutes.;
- Under most circumstances, if students arrive safely at the start of the day, they will remain until regular dismissal time;
- If School Principals have significant concerns and wish to dismiss buses in advance of the regular schedule, the School Principals *must* first have communication with the HPSTS General Manager *and* appropriate Superintendent(s).

## Severe Weather Encountered During Regular Transportation

- 1) If it is the opinion of the School Bus Driver that the weather conditions are jeopardizing the student's safety, the School Bus Driver shall follow Section 175 of the Highway Traffic Act.

Clause 170 (1) states that no person shall park, stand, or stop a vehicle on a roadway when it is not practical to do so off the roadway, "unless a clear view of the vehicle and of the roadway for at least 125 metres beyond the vehicle may be obtained from a distance of at least 125 metres from the vehicle in each direction of the highway". No vehicles, including School buses, are exempt from this clause.

Once the School Bus Driver has found a safe place to pull off, that Driver shall inform dispatch immediately. Dispatch will then inform the appropriate office.

- 2) In the event a regular School route is cancelled or discontinued, the events and circumstances leading to such a decision are too numerous to list. The students on the bus and expecting the bus (if an AM run) must be protected.

“If a route is cancelled with students aboard, the Board Staff, the School Staff and/or the Parent or Guardian must be contacted by the School/School Bus Company through an emergency communication system so that the Parent or Guardian will be advised as to the location and destination of the child.”

***“No person having charge of a child less than 16 years of age shall leave the child without making provision for his or her supervision and care that is reasonable in the circumstances.”***

- 3) School Bus Drivers to follow dispatch directions.

### **Extreme Weather Conditions**

The “well-being” of our Students, School and School Bus Company Staff, whether they walk, ride or drive will always be our “prime objective”. We feel having guidelines would assist everyone in making and supporting a decision. Also, we are restating that whenever there is “reasonable doubt” regarding safety, decisions will be made on the side of safety. As School Bus Companies will continue to support and remind all, that decisions made early in the morning are sometimes difficult, but if the test is “reasonable doubt” we have only one “prime objective”.

### **Transportation Cancellations:**

Due to the effects of cold on diesel fuel and electronic components of the bus, it is recommended that student transportation be cancelled if;

- 1) The temperature is or is forecast to be approximately -28° C or colder at 6:00 AM, and the temperature is **NOT** forecasted to rise to warmer than -28° C in the next two hours.

Due to the effects of cold and other weather conditions, it is recommended that student transportation be cancelled if;

- 1) The wind-chill factor is or is forecast to be approximately -40° C or colder as noted in Canada’s Wind Chill Index as a Very High Risk and exposed skin can freeze in 5 to 10 minutes, which is standard wait time for a bus.
- 2) Issues concerning special needs students in terms of medication, mobility and various health concerns create a “reasonable doubt” as to the operations of these routes during a severe weather warning, drifting and blowing snow and/or similar circumstances.
- 3) There is fog blanketing the region, snow is on the ground, and the temperature is **above** 0° C, as this type of fog historically does not dissipate, and it obstructs visibility of road signs, 9-1-1 address signs, other vehicles on the road, and students waiting at locations along the route.

## **2-Hour Transportation Delays:**

A 2-hour delay is an option under special circumstances such as power outages, downed power lines and/or any severe warnings that could affect students, but, the total picture will not be available until closer to bus or School time when a more informed decision can be made.

Due to the effects of cold on diesel fuel and electronic components of the bus, it is recommended that student transportation be delayed 2 hours if;

1. The temperature is or is forecast to be approximately -28° C or colder at 6:00 AM, and the temperature is forecasted to rise to warmer than -28° C in the next two hours.
  - a. If the temperature does not rise as forecasted, then it is recommended that student transportation will be cancelled for the day.

Due to the effects of cold and other weather conditions, it is recommended that student transportation be delayed 2 hours if;

2. There is fog blanketing the region and **no snow** is on the ground, as this type of fog obstructs road signs, 9-1-1 address signs, other vehicles on the road, and students waiting at locations along the route.
3. There is fog blanketing the region, snow is on the ground, and the temperature is **below** 0° C, as this type of “ice” fog historically dissipates as the weather warms and wind picks up speed.
  - a. If in two hours, the fog does not dissipate, then it is recommended that student transportation will be cancelled for the day.

It is believed that these guidelines will assist stakeholders when they make important decisions affecting many children, Parents or Guardians and Employees.