



## Adverse weather plan



December 2010 – Biffa vehicles queuing at the Sutton Courtenay landfill site.



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## Introduction

This document is intended to provide guidance on how the councils waste management team and waste collection contractor, Biffa operate in circumstances of adverse weather conditions. It is intended primarily to address the issues associated with disruption caused by snow and ice but can equally be implemented in other situations such as flooding.

## Aim and objectives

### Aim

The purpose of this plan is to set out the alert procedures, actions and communication actions which will be used by the council and Biffa in the event of disruption to the waste collection service as a result of adverse weather.

### Objectives

The objectives of this plan are to:

- set out the procedure for activating the adverse weather plan
- describe the council's and Biffa's role and responsibilities in responding to adverse weather
- provide guidance on what resources are available and how they will be deployed
- identify clear communication routes that will be used to inform all stakeholders
- provide information on possible additional actions that the council may wish to implement.

## 1.0 Alerts

### 1.1 Advance warnings

Warnings of adverse weather are received from the Met Office by email to the emergency planning officer and shared waste and parks manager. The following key members of staff will be notified if the advance warning is likely to result in disruption to the waste collection service:

- strategic director for corporate strategy
- head of corporate strategy
- shared communications manager
- Biffa's business manager (or nominated substitute)



- local services point at Abingdon
- Capita.

## 1.2 Weather forecasts

Where there is no specific warning but cold weather is expected the shared waste and parks manager and Biffa's business manager will be responsible for checking weather forecasts to ensure that precautionary actions are taken and the plan is activated if required.

## 1.3 Activation

The plan will be activated in situations where a suspension in service is necessary following consultation with the strategic director, head of corporate strategy, portfolio holders for waste and Biffa's business manager.

Any operational decisions need to be made by 8.00am for that days work programming.

## 2.0 Staffing

### 2.1 Biffa's inclement weather policy

Biffa employees are expected to make every reasonable effort to get to work, adapting their means of travel if necessary.

Biffa recognises the need to safely maintain services during adverse weather conditions, whilst properly discharging its duty of care to employees.

All employees are expected to present themselves for duty, this may mean, with management approval, alternative duties being given where it is not safe to carry out normal duties.

### 2.2 Re-deployment of resources

Where the plan has been activated and collections suspended, staff may be deployed to help clear snow/ice from pavements, walkways and the council's car parks in the main town centres. This will involve utilizing Biffa's fleet of street cleansing vehicles to carry the equipment and grit/sand.

Where possible Biffa will organise central working points close to where individual staff live to restrict unnecessary travel.



The garden waste collections are suspended for the ten working days following Christmas Day. The vehicles and crews are used to help collect extra waste that is presented by householders during this period. Should adverse weather occur at other times of the year, this option could be deployed after consultation with the strategic director and portfolio holders.

### **3.0 Communications**

#### **3.1 General provision of Information**

Residents are informed of their normal collection days and any changes to those days as a result of Bank holidays, through the published calendar. The calendar is also on the councils website.

We provide updates of pre agreed changes to collection days in the local press and council newsletter and text messaging.

#### **3.2 Providing information during adverse weather**

During periods of disruption, particularly in times of heavy snow or flooding some areas of the district may be cut off which presents an access problem. When this impacts on collections we will use the following communications to ensure that as many residents as possible are made aware of any changes to the collection arrangements:

- regular website updates
- weekly press releases
- internal staff updates
- parish and town council updates
- posters in main towns and villages
- 'text' alerts
- pre-recorded phone messages
- radio updates (Heart, Radio Oxford, Jack fm)
- OWP radio adverts and updates
- liaison with Oxfordshire County Council.



### 3.3 Communications action plan

The following actions will be followed

<b>Communication</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsible</b>
daily website updates	update web-site at 8.00am, midday and 4.30pm	council
weekly press releases	ensure press releases are supplied in time to meet deadlines	council
internal staff updates for all staff both Biffa and councils	daily staff briefings with Biffa to go through scripts to ensure a consistent message is delivered	Biffa/council
parish and town council updates	email daily updates to all district councillors, town and parish councils	council
posters/information – sent to parishes and district councillors	emailed to parishes and district councillors to encourage door stepping	Biffa/council
text and email alert system	See attached (appendix 1 – text alerts review)	council
phone system updates	daily updates a.m and p.m to the phone system with recorded messages informing residents of current situation	Biffa/council
radio adverts and updates	use radio to update residents	council/OWP
liaise with Oxfordshire County Council (OCC)	liaise with OCC to identify gritted routes to enable crews to collect from cleared roads	council



## **4.0 Operational Action Plan**

### **4.1 Winter Preparation**

The council will arrange for all council owned salt/grit bins to be filled in advance of the winter period.

Additional stock will be stored indoors in the contractors depot at Culham for use in clearing pavements, walkways and council car parks. This stock of salt/grit can be used by Biffa to assist collections.

Biffa will ensure that sufficient personal protective clothing is available to enable staff to operate in adverse weather.

### **4.2 Priority**

In periods of disruption priority will be given to waste services in the following order:

- refuse/food (one collection)
- clinical waste
- recycling/food (one collection)
- litter bin emptying
- garden waste
- bulky waste
- street cleansing.

Litter bin clearance has been given a relatively high priority as officers consider that during disruption to household collections residents are likely to dispose of their refuse in public bins.



### 4.3 Action Plan

In the event of adverse weather conditions that affect the waste collection service the following action plan will be implemented:

number of days disrupted	service	action	additional actions
less than one	recycling/food clinical waste litter Bins refuse/food garden waste bulky waste	crews will catch up on same day or complete the following day	Biffa to email the council a list of any outstanding roads/areas by the end of the day so this can be fed into the communications plan
one	recycling/food clinical waste litter bins refuse/food garden waste bulky waste	collections one day late with catch up on following Saturday  where certain roads remain unsafe to access, these will be collected on the next scheduled collection	arrange for disposal sites to be open on Saturday (Biffa)  deploy staff to clear pavements, walkways and council car parks in the main town centres, the list of sites to be treated will be provided by the council
two	recycling/food clinical waste litter bins refuse/food garden waste bulky waste	collections two days late in the initial week with catch up of one day on following Saturday  one day late in the next week with catch up being on the following Saturday  where certain roads remain unsafe to access, these will be collected on the next scheduled collection	arrange for disposal sites to be open on following two Saturdays (Biffa)  undertake collections where it is safe to do so  deploy staff to clear pavements, walkways and council car parks in the main town centres, the list of sites to be treated will be provided by the council  suspend street cleansing and deploy staff to assist collections where possible





			email council list of any outstanding roads/areas by the end of the day so this can be fed into the communications plan
three - ten	recycling/food clinical waste litter bins refuse/food garden waste bulky waste	revert back to published calendar when collections resume	additional side waste will be picked up at next two collection  street cleansing service suspended and staff utilized on catch up  garden waste service may be suspended and used to assist with collections  deploy staff to clear pavements, walkways and council car parks in the main town centres, the list of sites to be treated will be provided by the council  ensure disposal sites are available for use  use supervisor vans to deploy more staff and snow clearing equipment
ten or more	recycling/food clinical waste litter bins refuse/food garden waste bulky waste	revert back to published calendar when collections resume	street cleansing service remains suspended and staff utilized on catch up and collect additional side waste  ensure disposal sites are available for use  garden waste service suspended and used to assist with collections



			<p>use supervisor vans to deploy more staff and snow clearing equipment</p> <p>deploy staff to clear pavements, walkways and council car parks in the main town centres, the list of sites to be treated will be provided by the council</p> <p>consider arranging for agency staff and additional vehicles if available to be commissioned at an additional cost</p> <p>consider setting up strategic collection points throughout the districts for residents to take their waste for disposal, establish locations in conjunction with Oxfordshire County Council gritting routes</p> <p>provide residents with sacks for use and storage of waste and recycling, residents will need to collect sacks from location points throughout the district</p>
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**4.4 Christmas Period**

If catch up can not be achieved prior to the Christmas calendar starting then collections will revert to the published Christmas calendar. All excess waste and recycling for the next two weeks will be collected from properties that have missed collections.



## APPENDIX 1

### Text Alert System

**Review of how the waste text service worked during the disruptions to collections over Christmas and New Year 2010/11 and the actions which have been put in place for future occurrences**

Text message	Problem	Action/Recommendation
<p>We've had to cancel today's bin collections. Please put this week's waste out with your next collection. Sorry for the inconvenience.</p> <p>Same message sent out later that day advising that the following day's collections were also cancelled.</p>	<p>Message is not clear. It means you can put out this week's waste next time you are due a collection of the same type of waste (i.e. if your recycling had been missed you can put out extra recycling when this is next collected in a fortnight) but could be interpreted as put both bins out with your next collection</p>	<p>All texts should clearly state which bin or kind of waste we are referring to</p> <p>"We've had to cancel today's bin collections. Please put this week's recycling out with your next recycling collection. Sorry for the inconvenience."</p>
<p>We will do our best to collect bins missed on Mon and Tue on main routes over the next few days. If it is safe to do so please leave your bin out.</p>	<p>Texts contradicted information on our websites (probably because the website was updated with the latest update following these texts being sent).</p>	<p>Need to ensure we keep text subscribers informed if plans change. This means we may need to send out update texts if we are no longer able to do what we said.</p> <p>For example: "Conditions remain dangerous so only a few collections will go ahead today. Please leave your bins out and we will update you when we know when your next collection will be."</p> <p>All web updates should also be marked with a date and time so it's clear how current the update is</p>



<p>Apologies if we didn't empty your bins today due to the road conditions. We will collect side waste with your next green bin collection.</p>	<p>Message is not clear. Many residents may not understand the term 'side waste' and again the text does not specify what kind of side waste we will take (people could think this meant they could put out extra rubbish with their next recycling collection)</p>	<p>As above, all texts should clearly state which bin or kind of waste we are referring to.</p> <p>"Apologies if we didn't empty your bins today due to the road conditions. We will collect extra recycling with your next green bin collection."</p>
<p>Please don't put your bins out tonight, your usual collection has moved to Wednesday 29th December this week. Put them out on Tuesday night instead.</p>	<p>Message is not clear as they do not state which bin to put out</p>	<p>All texts sent out will clearly state which bins to put out.</p> <p>We also now send one text the night before the usual collection saying do not put your bins out tonight your collection has changed with a follow up text the night before the revised collection advising residents they can now put out their bins (previously we just sent out one the night before the revised collection which could have meant bins being put out a day too soon).</p>
	<p>Message did not reflect what was happening in reality</p>	<p>In future Biffa will let us know if some collections have not been completed on certain days we will send a text out to say that, and to advise people to leave their bins out so collections can be finished off the following day.</p>
	<p>No information given to inform subscribers that garden waste collections had been temporarily suspended</p>	<p>The decision has been taken to suspend garden waste collections for two weeks over Christmas in the future which we are communicating to customers.</p> <p>However if there is disruption to collections at any other time we will communicate by other means. We will communicate specific news about garden waste collections to all brown bin customers (including but not only text subscribers)</p>

**Biffa**

	Timing of texts.	Texts should not be sent out too late. No later than 4:30pm.
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