



## SG007 Transfers in Adverse Weather: ScotSTAR teams

1. Key Recommendations for operational use		
<b>For use by:</b> All ScotSTAR teams. <b>For information:</b> SAS. <b>Internet:</b> Yes		
1	Information Gathering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When adverse weather conditions are present or suspected:</li> <li>• Detailed information should be collected by local teams and be made available at the daily conference call.</li> <li>• Sources of information are:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Air Ambulance pilots (discussed daily at the 08:30 ScotSTAR brief)</li> <li>- <a href="http://www.metoffice.gov.uk/public/weather/warnings">http://www.metoffice.gov.uk/public/weather/warnings</a></li> <li>- <a href="https://trafficscotland.org/weather">https://trafficscotland.org/weather</a></li> <li>- <a href="https://trafficscotland.org/livetrafficcameras">https://trafficscotland.org/livetrafficcameras</a></li> <li>- Traffic Scotland: 0141 272 7100</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
2	Met Office Warnings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Met Office issues weather warnings: the National Severe Weather Warning Service.</li> <li>• These warnings are given a colour (yellow, amber or red) depending on a combination of both the impact the weather may have and the likelihood of those impacts occurring.</li> <li>• Review any relevant warnings that pertain to the mission: both referring and receiving areas and also on the reasonable route of the transfer by whichever means of transport.</li> <li>• <b>Yellow Warning:</b> when it is likely that the weather will cause some low level impacts, including some disruption to travel in a few places. Many people may be able to continue with their daily routine. Read the content of yellow warnings.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ScotSTAR: business as usual but proceed with caution</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Amber Warning:</b> an increased likelihood of impacts from severe weather, which could potentially disrupt plans. There are possible travel delays, road and rail closures, power cuts and potential risk to life and property. Think about changing plans:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ScotSTAR: postpone elective transfers; consider if more urgent cases can be delayed until the weather improves.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Red Warning:</b> dangerous weather is expected. It is very likely that there will be a risk to life, with substantial disruption to travel, energy supplies and possibly widespread damage to property and infrastructure. Take action to keep yourself and others safe from the impact of the severe weather.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ScotSTAR: avoid travelling where possible.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
3	Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inform the ScotSTAR manager on-call if an emergency transport is required in severe weather.</li> <li>• Consider if it is feasible for the patient to remain in the referring hospital until the weather improves:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- may involve the transport team providing additional resources in the referring hospital.</li> <li>- if there is a difference of opinion between referring clinician and retrieval clinician about the appropriateness of transfer, the referring clinician should seek an additional opinion and escalate the decision locally to unit lead.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>



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3	Planning, cont	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider a closer or more accessible receiving hospital:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- all neonatal units have been asked to provide an emergency stabilisation area in exceptional circumstances (using transport equipment and transport staff).</li> </ul> </li> <li>• A provisional route <b>must</b> be established prior to departure</li> <li>• Consider an alternative method of travel:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- may include early discussion regarding the use of Search and Rescue aircraft <i>via</i> the Air Ambulance manager.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
4	Prior to Departure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For road transfers, <b>ambulance should be completely fuelled</b> prior to departure:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- to ensure sufficient fuel is available for heating if there is a significant delay</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Road</b> winter kit available must include:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- shovel</li> <li>- high visibility jackets for each staff member and accompanying relative</li> <li>- 230V domestic supply ambulance charging cable</li> <li>- DC cabling for essential equipment</li> <li>- Mobile phone and charger</li> <li>- Transwarmer x2 (for paediatric and neonatal transfers)</li> <li>- Food for staff</li> <li>- Torch</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Air</b> winter kit available must include transwarmer for paediatric and neonatal transfers</li> <li>• <b>Gas consumption</b> calculations should be doubled to ensure sufficient reserves if there is substantial delay:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- consider a ventilator with an independent air supply or vehicle with air compressor.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• In neonatal and paediatric transfers, parents should be offered the opportunity to travel as per usual protocol. An emergency transfer will only be conducted if deemed safe and appropriate, and the risk of an adverse event is low.</li> </ul>
5	During Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The <b>transport team</b> are responsible for the safety of the patient and for updating the ScotSTAR manager on-call, <i>via</i> SSD to any changes in the patient's condition (both improvements and deteriorations), which may alter transfer plans.</li> <li>• During road journeys, the <b>ambulance crew</b> is responsible for judging the safety of road conditions and updating the ScotSTAR manager on-call to current conditions <i>via</i> SSD.</li> <li>• During flights, safe flight planning is the responsibility of the <b>Pilot in Command</b>. Flight crew should update SSD about any changes to plans due to changing weather conditions.</li> <li>• The <b>Shift Supervisor at SSD</b> is responsible for updating the ScotSTAR manager on-call with crew location <i>via</i> GPS tracking. Calls should be coordinated through SSD for a single point of contact and as calls are recorded for subsequent debrief.</li> <li>• The <b>ScotSTAR manager on-call</b> is responsible for coordinating planning, disseminating information to the team and updating receiving hospitals as appropriate</li> </ul>



## SG007 Transfers in Adverse Weather: ScotSTAR teams

2. Document History			
Reference Number	SG007		
Version	1		
Writing group (Chair in bold)	Rob Dalziel	Operational Lead	Air Ambulance
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Date issued	20th January 2020		
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Distribution	ScotSTAR	EMRS West	✓
		EMRS North	✓
		Paediatric	✓
		Neonatal	✓
	Referring centres via service websites		✓
	BASICS Scotland		X
	Medic 1		X
	Tayside Trauma Team		X
	Rural GPs Association of Scotland		X
	SAS	Air Ambulance Division	for information
Specialist Services Desk		for information	





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### 3. Scope and purpose

- Overall objectives:

Severe weather can affect the safety of patients, parents and transport staff. Decision making during transfers in severe weather will be a collaborative process, involving balancing risk using up-to-date information. It will be led by the ScotSTAR manager on-call but involves all members of the transport service and related services (including Search and Rescue if appropriate). Calls to and from SSD should be co-ordinated through the Shift Supervisor

- Feedback:

Comments on this guideline can be sent to: [scotamb.CPG@nhs.net](mailto:scotamb.CPG@nhs.net)

- Equality Impact Assessment:

Applied to the ScotSTAR Clinical Standards group processes.