

Illinois SMP Severe Weather and Disaster Safety Policy

If an emergency, disaster, or severe weather occur while an SMP volunteer is performing volunteer work, the following, at a minimum, should be addressed:

- Seek a safe and adequately supplied place of refuge. Seek guidance from on-site staff.
- Call for emergency assistance by dialing 911 from any phone.
- Contact your supervisor if possible. SMP staff and volunteers should share appropriate contact information with each other before starting volunteer duties in case an emergency situation arises.

Severe or inclement weather can make travel (e.g., leaving your home, walking, driving, or taking public transit) extremely dangerous. Examples of severe weather include snow, ice, flooding, strong wind, extreme cold or hot temperatures, and other weather that could make it dangerous to go outside or to travel. Always consider your safety when deciding whether or not to stay home during severe weather. **If there is any doubt, it is best to stay home.** In cases where severe weather makes going outside or travel unsafe, follow these steps:

Volunteer Supervisors

- When severe weather is expected, volunteer supervisors should decide if conditions could make it dangerous for volunteers to leave their homes or travel.
- If a supervisor determines early that conditions could be dangerous, they should call any volunteers scheduled to work and cancel their volunteer duties. If a supervisor's office is closed, they should call any volunteers for that day to cancel their work.
 - Supervisors should call any sites at which volunteers are scheduled to work, particularly presentation sites, and cancel for that day. If appropriate, try to reschedule.

Please note: Supervisors should always provide their volunteers with contact information for any sites where they would be volunteering, in case you cannot be reached, and the volunteer needs to call the site directly.

Volunteers

- Volunteers always have the right to decide that weather would make it unsafe to leave their homes or to travel for their volunteer work. **If you feel unsafe, please stay home.**

- If a volunteer needs to stay home, they should call their supervisors early as possible and speak directly with the supervisor or someone at their office, not voicemail.
 - When severe weather is expected, plan ahead and make a decision early. Whenever possible, if you need to miss an event or presentation, contact your supervisor at least a day before to allow time for your supervisor to reschedule.
- If you are unable to speak directly with your supervisor or someone at their office to cancel your work, volunteers should:
 1. Contact SMP staff at AgeOptions for assistance: (800) 699-9043.
 2. Call the contact at the site where you would have volunteered to inform them that you will not be able to come and that your SMP supervisor will follow-up to reschedule.

Always consider your safety when deciding whether or not to stay home. **If there is any doubt, it is best to stay home.**

If you have any questions about the policies listed above, please contact the SMP Volunteer Coordinator at AgeOptions (708) 383-0258 or (800) 699-9043.