

Handling Snow Days With Your Nanny

When commuting to work becomes potentially unsafe due to a blizzard or a heavy snow day, a traditional worker could take a paid or unpaid day off, or in some cases, even choose to work from home.

Nannies don't have that luxury. They cannot work from home for obvious reasons and they may not want to take unpaid leave.

Also, they may be expected to do everything possible to get to their workplace on a foul weather day so that their employer can get to work.

If you already have a snow day policy as part of your work agreement with your nanny, it can reduce the frustrations and resentment over bad weather days that could otherwise hurt your relationship with the nanny at some point.

Create a Snow Day Policy Beforehand

It is a good idea to draft a snow day policy while you are drawing up the work agreement or nanny contract. Consider both your needs and those of your nanny while creating a policy so that it is reasonable for both sides. Make sure that your nanny clearly understands the responsibilities before starting work.

Express Your Job Expectations Clearly

It is important to clearly communicate your expectations regarding snow or bad weather days. Certain jobs require their employees to report to work regardless of weather conditions, such as emergency medical staff, police officers, etc. In a situation where a nanny works for someone in one of these types of positions, the nanny must report for work so that the employer can do their job. If a heavy storm is predicted, the family may want the nanny to stay overnight the night prior. Hopefully this can be worked out mutually, but ultimately it should be the employer's decision if the nanny should stay overnight, with as much notice as possible. In such a case where the family requires a nanny to spend the night, the family may wish to compensate the nanny for the extra hours.

If you are a teacher who can be home on school snow days or you're a work-from-home parent, then you'll likely have more flexibility with your job when bad weather hits. In that case, it might be perfectly alright if your nanny decides to skip work. Then there are the situations when you choose to work from home in bad weather but still need your nanny to take care of your children in order to focus on your work. Make sure that your nanny is aware of these situations should they occur.

Another factor that should be addressed when creating a snow day policy is whether or not the nanny has any dependents (including pets). If the family is open to it, the nanny may bring her child or pet to stay overnight at the family's home. Alternatively, the employer may provide extra monetary compensation so the nanny can arrange for backup care.

Define a Snow Day

Everybody's definition of bad weather differs. While you may think that roads are fine, your nanny may think it is not safe to travel at all. That's why you should define what is considered a snow day prior to finalizing the nanny contract.

It could be when government offices or local schools are closed. Or it could be when your company says you should stay home or when a state declares an emergency. If your nanny relies on public transportation to get to work, then maybe it's a snow day when the bus lines or subways are delayed or closed altogether. Whatever your definition of a snow day is, make sure that your nanny is informed about it beforehand and agrees with it before signing on to employment with you.

How Will You Pay Your Nanny for a Snow Day?

Before they start working for you, clearly communicate how they will be compensated for snow days. If the bad weather day meets your definition of a snow day, you can treat it like an extra paid day off at the normal hourly rate you pay your nanny.

In case it's a snow day as defined by the contract and they say they're not coming into work due to the bad weather, you can decide to pay them for normal hours. You can count it as one of their personal days where they get paid for the day. Then you can deduct it from their allotted paid time off. If it turns out your nanny is out of paid time off days, you may choose not to pay them for that snow day. You can also choose to provide them an allotted amount "snow days" as part of their paid time off package. This is extremely helpful if you live in an area with really bad weather in the winter season.

If you need them to stay the night, it's a good idea to compensate them for those extra hours even though technically they may not be at work.

Back-Up Services

Portland Nannies does provide back-up childcare services in the event that a nanny is unable to make it into work. The babysitting list is a great resource for families looking for a fill-in sitter. Unfortunately for storms and severe weather, it isn't likely that sitters would be comfortable commuting for a babysitting position. If trying to find a sitter from the list in this situation, we recommend sticking to nannies in your city only to limit the possibly dangerous driving conditions, shorter commute, use of Lyft, etc.