

Press Release

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For Immediate Release

Read the advice on snow and ice

East Sussex County Council's preparations for winter are now well underway.

We currently have well over 10,000 tonnes of salt in our depots, our fleet of 25 gritters have already been in action, and our primary gritting route maps are available on our website.

And should we get a repeat of last winter's severe weather, we want to reassure residents and businesses they can clear snow and ice from pavements, pathways and public spaces without fear of being sued.

Last year many members of the public were put off taking action to clear the area around their properties because they feared they might be sued by someone slipping over.

Now, the Government has published a series of guidelines that clearly state there is no law preventing you from doing this, and that it is very unlikely you would face any legal liability as long as you are careful and use common sense.

The advice can be found at www.direct.gov.uk.

Practical advice includes:

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- Start early: it is much easier to remove fresh, loose snow compared to compacted ice that has been compressed by people walking on it.
- Do not use hot water. This will melt the snow, but may replace it with black ice, increasing the risk of injury.
- Be a good neighbour: some people may be unable to clear snow and ice on paths leading to their property or indeed the footway fronting their property. Snowfall and cold weather pose particular difficulties for them gaining access to and from their property or walking to the shops.
- If shovelling snow, consider where you are going to put it, so that it does not block people's paths, or block drainage channels. This could shift the problem elsewhere.
- Make a pathway down the middle of the area to be cleared first, so you have a clear surface to walk on. Then you can shovel the snow from the centre to the sides.
- Spreading some salt on the area you have cleared will help to prevent any ice forming. Table salt or dishwasher salt will work, but avoid spreading on plants or grass as they may be damaged by it. A few grams (a tablespoon) for each square metre you clear should work. The salt found in salting bins will be needed for keeping roads clear.
- Use the sun to your advantage. Removing the top layer of snow will allow the sun to melt any ice beneath; however, you will need to cover any ice with salt to stop it refreezing overnight.

Meanwhile, we are filling all our 750 salt bins across the county. We are also working with local parish and town councils, resident associations and businesses to assist them with acquiring extra bins.

We have a stock of more than 300 one-tonne Hippo bags at our various highway depots, which will be filled and distributed to heavily pedestrianised areas when there are severe icy conditions. We will be working closely with the street cleansing teams from our district and borough colleagues on the spreading of the salt.

Councillor Matthew Lock, Lead Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment, said: “Last year people were cautious about clearing snow and ice for fear of being sued, but with this new guidance communities can work together to make sure everyone stays safe if we get a repeat of last year’s snowy weather.

“We need to focus on clearing and salting our priority routes, and keeping our essential services running. To help us do this, we need you to do your bit. Please act in a neighbourly way by clearing snow and ice from pavements, pathways and other public spaces.”

There is more information and advice on our website:
www.eastsussex.gov.uk/winterroads

Notes for editors

Our gritting routes map system only provides information about whether a road is on a primary gritting route. It does not tell you whether the roads have been gritted. Primary gritting routes are the busiest roads and are given priority in order to avoid the most serious accidents. They include the major A, B and about 75% of C roads.

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