

## **GUIDANCE ON SNOW CLEARING AND SALT SPREADING**

Snow clearers have a duty to take reasonable care so as not to create a new and possibly worse risk, such as piling up a heap of snow that would cause an obstruction or other hazard, or leaving the area in such a condition as to make slips more likely.

Snow is easier to clear when it is fresh than when it has become compacted and frozen. Shovels full of snow are quite heavy and snow clearers should take care that they do not injure themselves. Shovels etc must not be left where they could present a safety hazard to members of the public.

We ask that residents respect the Parish Council's responsibility to manage the supply of salt and observe the guidance.

Precautionary salting of dry pavements may not always seem to be an effective use of salt and effort, although when used prior to heavy snowfall it can make compacted snow and ice easier to lift from the pavement.

### **Do:**

- Wear suitable clothing and footwear and take care not to injure or overexert yourself.
- Clear snow responsibly so as not to create a new and possibly worse risk.
- Make sure a supply of salt is accessible before attempting to clear snow and ice
- Keep the padlock and key safe during use
- Be aware of other people around you as you work, to avoid injury
- Clear snow in the morning if possible before it gets packed together from being walked on and to allow the sun to melt any ice beneath it
- Pay particular attention to steps and steep slopes
- Make a path down the centre then shovel from there to the sides
- Move snow to a porous surface such as a grass verge or garden
- Treat cleared areas immediately with salt to prevent freezing
- Spread salt/grit evenly and at appropriate spread rates (20 grams or 1 tablespoonful to treat a square metre of ice)
- Use salt only on the public footways and footpaths, not private property
- Avoid applying salt to plants or grass
- Try to keep the salt in the bins dry – clear snow from the lids before opening and close them during use if rain or snow is falling, or there is a risk of thawing snow dripping into the bins
- Return unused salt to the bin, replace the padlock and return the key
- Clear any excess salt or grit remaining once the snow / ice has melted

## **Don't:**

- Use salt from public bins on private paths and drives
- Use water to melt snow and ice, if there is a risk it will refreeze
- Move snow to a location where it will create another risk such as another part of the pavement, road or where people are likely to walk
- Block drives, pathways and drainage channels or pile snow against buildings
- Use excessive salt, grit or other materials so as to create a new or worse risk once the snow / ice has melted.
- Create an obstruction or trip hazard with wheelbarrows and shovels etc where they may be a trip hazard
- Throw shovels of snow where there might be a risk to people, cars or property from hidden stones etc

## **LEGAL ADVICE**

Throughout the country people have been hesitant to clear snow because of fears of litigation if someone should slip on the treated area. This has been raised at numerous forums since the winter of 2009/2010 and the consensus appears to be that common sense should prevail. The Ministry of Justice issued a letter during the first half of 2010 which states: "The prospects of a person who volunteers to clear snow from a pavement being successfully sued for damages by a person who subsequently slips on the cleared area and is injured are very small".

The advice issued by the Department for Transport on the next page was taken from the Met Office website on 20 November 2012.

<http://www.metoffice.gov.uk/learning/get-ready-for-winter/out-and-about/the-snow-code>



## **The Snow Code**

**Advice issued by the Department for Transport on clearing snow and ice from the pavement outside your home or public spaces to prevent slips and falls. Follow the snow code to clear snow and ice safely.**

### **The snow code - tips on clearing snow and ice from pavements or public spaces**

Don't be put off clearing paths because you're afraid someone will get injured. Remember, people walking on snow and ice have a responsibility to be careful themselves.

Follow the advice below to make sure you clear the pathway safely and effectively.

And don't believe the myths - it's unlikely you'll be sued or held legally responsible for any injuries if you have cleared the path carefully.

### **Clear the snow and ice early in the day**

It's easier to move fresh, loose snow rather than hard snow that has packed together from people walking on it. So if possible, start removing the snow and ice in the morning. If you remove the top layer of snow in the morning, any sunshine during the day will help melt any ice beneath. You can then cover the path with salt before nightfall to stop it refreezing overnight.

### **Preventing slips**

Pay extra attention to clearing snow and ice from steps and steep pathways - you might need to use more salt on these areas

Use salt or sand - not water

Don't make the pathways more dangerous by causing them to refreeze. If you use water to melt the snow, it may refreeze and turn to black ice. Black ice increases the risk of injuries as it is invisible and very slippery.

You can melt snow or prevent black ice by spreading some salt on the area you have cleared. You can use ordinary table or dishwasher salt - a tablespoon for each square metre you clear should work. Don't use the salt found in salting bins [on private property] - this will be needed to keep the roads clear.

Be careful not to spread salt on plants or grass as it may damage them.

If you don't have enough salt, you can also use sand or ash. These won't stop the path icing over as effectively as salt, but will provide good grip underfoot.

### **Take care where you move the snow**

When you're shovelling snow, take care where you put it so it doesn't block people's paths or drains. Make sure you make a path down the middle of the area to be cleared first, so you have a clear surface to walk on. Then shovel the snow from the centre of the path to the sides.

### **Offer to clear your neighbours' paths**

If your neighbour will have difficulty getting in and out of their home, offer to clear snow and ice around their property as well. Check that any elderly or disabled neighbours are alright in the cold weather. If you're worried about them, try contacting their relatives or friends, or if necessary the local council.

### **Winter services from your local council**

Your local council will provide many winter services such as clearing local roads and pavements in your area. For information about your council's winter service, check its website.

The advice on this page comes from the Department for Transport