



Snow guide for Oxfordshire Communities

Introduction

Last winter was one of the most severe for decades and all parts of Oxfordshire experienced heavy snow. This winter is following a similar pattern.

As Oxfordshire County Council's transport teams worked round the clock to keep key routes open and safe, many communities supported these efforts by keeping their local pavements and public spaces clear of snow and ice.

However some organisations and individuals were put off doing so because of fears of being sued.

This leaflet explains the law to provide reassurance and offers advice on clearing snow and ice safely in future. It also outlines what the council will be doing to assist communities.

The law

There is no law stopping anyone from clearing snow and ice in public spaces, on the pavement and other routes.

If an accident does happen, it is highly unlikely that you would be sued as long as you:

- ❖ are careful
- ❖ use common sense to make sure that you don't make a pavement or pathway clearly more dangerous than before

The best way to clear snow and ice safely

- ❖ Start early - it's much easier to clear fresh, loose snow compared to compacted ice that has been compressed by people walking on it
- ❖ Don't use hot water - this will melt the snow, but it may be replaced with black ice, increasing the risk of injury
- ❖ Think where you are going to put cleared snow and ice, so that you don't block other routes or drainage channels
- ❖ Make a pathway down the middle first, so you have a cleared surface to walk on
- ❖ Spread some salt on areas you have cleared to help stop ice forming. Table or dishwasher salt will work, or if not, sand or ash will do
- ❖ Pay particular attention when clearing steps and steep gradients
- ❖ Use the sun to your advantage - removing the top layer of snow will allow the sun to melt any ice beneath. But you will need to cover any ice with salt to stop it refreezing overnight
- ❖ Be a good neighbour - some people may be less able to safely clear snow and ice

How the county council will help

As well as working with the police and NHS to ensure all key services are prepared and that priority routes are kept open, the county council will work with parish councils and local communities to ensure they are also well prepared and have the essential contact numbers they need.

Always call 08453 10 11 11

Roads

- ❖ The council will salt priority roads
- ❖ The council duty officer will consider requests to keep non-priority routes to hospitals and schools salted
- ❖ When able we will try to keep salt bins stocked, as far as resources and supplies allow. Salt in these bins is for use on the highways only.

Schools

- ❖ Schools should have established snow plans and have made arrangements to clear their sites. In deciding whether it is possible to open. The presumption will be that schools should remain open unless there are good reasons for them not to be

Protecting the needy and vulnerable

- ❖ The council will prioritise services for those most in need

What the council can't do

- ❖ Salt most pavements and car parks
- ❖ Salt bus routes on non-priority roads (though we will try to work with the bus companies to minimise the impact on bus users)



Parish council Checklist

Please advise your parishioners to travel only if it is absolutely necessary

Have you...

- ❖ Made an emergency plan?
- ❖ Checked that a 4 x 4 with tractor tow to the nearest treated road has been identified for medical and other emergencies?
- ❖ Compiled a list of people who might need a bit of extra help and support?
- ❖ Talked to local farmers about helping out locally?
- ❖ Issued local advice about helping neighbours and stocking up on essential supplies, asking if people they have enough food for a fortnight?
- ❖ Asked people if they have enough heating oil at the start of the winter
- ❖ Advised your parishioners who have an absolute need to travel that they will need to make their own provisions for 4x4 or snow tyres (with chains if necessary)

For more information

You should already have a list of key contacts but you can also get advice from the county council's website

www.oxfordshire.gov.uk