

Winter Service Policy

Version & Policy Number	Version 3.0
Guardian	Andy Tatt 01572758342
Date Produced	21/07/21
Next Review Date	

Approved by Scrutiny	
Approved by Cabinet	
Approved by Full Council	

Summary of document

The statutory basis for Winter Service in England and Wales is addressed through Section 41 (1A) of the Highways Act on the 31st October 2003, by Section 111 of the Railways and Safety Transport Act 2003.

The Railways and Transport Safety Act 2003 extends the requirements of Section 41 of the Highways Act 1980 to place a specific duty on a Highway Authority to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that safe passage along a highway is not endangered by snow or ice. By using the words 'reasonably practicable' the

legislation recognises that it is not possible to treat the entire network or to keep the treated parts of the network clear of snow and ice at all times.

The Council's aim is to respond effectively to the weather conditions, to ensure key corridors of the highway network are operating satisfactorily to support residents, businesses and other service providers.

The purpose of this policy is to clarify both the standard and extent of the winter maintenance service the Council will provide by:

- Maintaining key elements of the highway network and facilitating public transport accessibility;
- Confirming what areas will not receive winter maintenance provision; and
- Signposting residents, community groups, businesses and schools to self-help information to ensure they can adequately prepare themselves.

This Highways Winter Service Policy aims to comply with legislation by its prioritised treatment of key areas of its highway network and thus ensure the Council acts in a reasonably practicable manner at all times within available resources.

This policy and the Winter Service Operational Plan have been developed in accordance with the recommendations contained within Well- Managed Highway Infrastructure: A Code of Practice Published by the UK Roads Liaison Group October 2016.

Contents

		<i>Page</i>
1.0	Policy statement	4
2.0	Scope	4
3.0	Responsibilities and Management Arrangements	4
4.0	Route Prioritisation	5
5.0	Treatment Routes	5/6
5.1	Carriageways	6
5.2	Footways	6
5.3	Cycleways	6
5.4	Car Parks	7
6.0	Grit Bins	7
7.0	Parish Snow Wardens	8
8.0	Plant and Resources	8
9.0	Salt	8/9
10.0	Weather Prediction and Information	9
10.1	Winter Risk Period	9
10.2	Forecast Arrangements	9
10.3	Decision Making Process	9
11.0	Cross Border Agreement	9/10
12.0	Information and Publicity	10
13.0	Winter Service Operational Plan	10
14.0	Updating	10

1.0 Policy Statement

The Council aims to provide a winter service which, as far as is reasonably practical, will permit safe movement of traffic and minimise delays and accidents directly attributable to adverse weather conditions having regard to financial constraints and legal requirements.

2.0 Scope

This policy details the context for Rutland County Council's winter service provision on the highway network. It is prepared in accordance with the recommendations of the Well Managed Highway Infrastructure – A Code of Practice (the Code) and covers all elements of the service. The Policy includes how the Council's will prioritise its routes, arrange for appropriate treatment, deployment of personnel and plant to enable salting; and snow clearance of the highway in accordance with the specified response times.

How the service is delivered is covered by the Winter Service Operational Plan.

3.0 Responsibilities and management arrangements

The senior highways manager is responsible for implementing the Winter Service Policy.

The Winter Service will be delivered in accordance with the Winter Service Operational Plan (see Annex F)

As Client, the Council will provide road salt and will decide what action is required on a daily basis during the winter risk period.

The term maintenance contractor will provide gritters, gritter drivers, fuel, loader and any other equipment required.

The out of hour's duty officer is responsible for the day to day operation of the council's highways winter service. This person is responsible for deploying the winter service when required.

The winter risk period runs from the 1st October until 30th April.

4.0 Route Prioritisation

The Winter Maintenance Policy ensures, so far as reasonably practicable, that safe passage along an adopted highway is not endangered by snow or ice. Due to the size of the network, financial implications and operational resources, it is not considered to be practically possible to provide winter services on all parts of the highway network in one operation, and ensure that all running surfaces are kept free from ice and snow at all times, even on the treated parts of the highway network.

There are a wide variety of highway types, functions and uses across the County, and it is not practicable to either assess or build resilience across all of the network. There is a need to focus resilience risk assessments and plans on a subset of each network - defined as the “Resilient Network” and outlined in Section A.4 of the Code. It has been developed and reviewed as necessary to ensure that it provides:

- connectivity between major communities;
- links to the strategic highway network;
- connectivity across authority boundaries where appropriate;
- links to transport interchanges;
- access to emergency facilities including Fire and Rescue, Police, Ambulance Services and hospitals;
- links to critical infrastructure (ports, power stations, water treatment works etc);
- principal public transport routes, access to rail and bus stations, and to bus garages and other depots; and
- other locally important facilities.

The highway network within the County will be assessed using the scoring criteria identified in Annex A.

Each route will be given a score based on the criteria in Annex A, and routes will be determined on the following basis:

Scoring Criteria	Treatment
Score > 120	Precautionary Route
Access to school, medical facility or emergency services, and NOT on either of the above	Snow Route

The approved treatment routes will be identified in the Winter Service Operational Plan (Annex F), and published on the Council’s website.

The Minimum Winter Network will be defined as all A & B class roads throughout the County, and in times of severe snow, all available resources will be directed to keeping these open.

5.0 Treatment Routes

5.1 Carriageways

Rutland County Council will prioritise the gritted network by defining if a route is either a precautionary route, secondary route or a snow route. The determined routes will be included within the Winter Service Operational Plan.

Precautionary Route: This is the advanced application of salt applied to a road to prevent ice forming and snow settling. These routes should be completed within 4 hours of the instructed start time.

Snow Route: When heavy snow is predicted (greater than 10mm expected to settle), these routes will be gritted alongside the precautionary routes.

During severe winter conditions the Council will consider service requests for reactive gritting from members of the community where difficulties are being experienced, and in particular where assistance from us would benefit the wider community in terms of travel and accessing essential services. All requests for service can only be considered in accordance with the winter service priorities and available resources.

5.2 Footways

Footways will not normally receive a precautionary treatment, however when snow is forecast, precautionary gritting will be carried out on the main footways in Oakham and Uppingham town centre areas only. Where resources are available, treatment of footways after snowfall, other than in Oakham and Uppingham town centres, will take place on a priority basis. i.e. areas with high numbers of vulnerable users.

In Oakham the town centre is defined as the following roads:

- a) High St
- b) Melton Rd
- c) New St
- d) Church St
- e) Gaol St
- f) Northgate
- g) Market St
- h) Market Place
- i) Mill St
- j) Burley Rd

In Uppingham the town centre is defined as the following roads:

- a) Market Place
- b) High St East
- c) High St West
- d) Orange St
- e) Queen St
- f) North St East
- g) North St West

5.3 Cycleways

Cycleways will not receive a precautionary treatment.

5.4 Car Parks

Car parks will not normally receive a precautionary treatment, however when snow is forecast, precautionary gritting will be carried out on the Council's car parks in Oakham & Uppingham (except Queens Road car park in Uppingham, as this is too small to accommodate a gritter).

The most comprehensive and current summary of roads and footways included in our designated gritting routes are available on the Council's web page and can be accessed by logging on to <https://roadworks.org/> under 'driver information/winter gritting routes'.

Requests for routes additions will be considered by the Senior Highways Manager, and Portfolioholder for Highways, against the defined criteria in Annex A.

6.0 Grit Bins

To avoid contamination salt will only be provided in bins and not left in heaps. Bins are supplied and installed upon request from Parish or Town Councils, which fund the initial purchase of the bins. All requests for new grit bins must be submitted through the Parish Council and sent through to the highways department for consideration.

Following a request for a grit bin, an assessment will be carried out using the form in Annex B.

In addition the following criteria will also be taken into account:

- Placement of grit bin will not obstruct the free passage of pedestrians
- Grit bins will only be provided on the public highway
- Permission will be sought from property owners, if there is a proposal to place a grit bin outside their home

Grit bins will only be provided if a score of greater than 100 is achieved, when assessed against the criteria in Annex B.

If a grit bin is provided, and subsequently damaged, the Town/Parish Council will meet the cost of the replacement bin, if it is still required.

It is the responsibility of the Parish Council to inform Rutland County Council in a timely manner, as to when grit bin refills are required during the winter period. Requests for re-fills must be submitted to the Parish Council for consideration.

We will endeavour to re-fill empty grit bins within 5 working days of the request being received; as an authority our aim is to assist Parish and Town councils to keep their communities safe.

Grit bins will be checked annually and refilled before the start of the winter season.

Grit bins will be filled with a 50/50 mix of grit/sharp sand.

Grit bins will be filled for free at the start of the winter season. Parishes will receive one further free re-fill. Additional re-fills will be charged at the rate shown in the schedule of Approved Fees and Charges.

A schedule of grit bins will be included in the Winter Service Operational Plan (Annex F) and published on the Council's website

7.0 Snow Warden Scheme

In winter, we focus on salting the major routes which carry the most traffic. This sometimes means smaller communities don't receive as much help as they would like. During times of extreme weather, through the Snow Warden Scheme we will provide advice and training and to community groups and parish councils who are helping each other on a voluntary basis. The Snow Warden is the key point of contact between Rutland County Council (RCC) and the local community.

Full details of the snow warden scheme, including duties, application forms, and risk assessments can be found in Annex C.

Rutland County Council will provide the following equipment for snow wardens to enable them to clear snow and spread the salt evenly across the footway:

- snow shovel
- fluorescent waistcoat
- waterproof gloves

The equipment must be collected from the highways depot.

Parish Councils must nominate designated snow wardens prior to the start of the winter season.

Rutland County Council will provide specific training for snow wardens prior to the winter season.

8.0 Plant and Resources

Sufficient and suitable vehicles will be provided and maintained to treat all designated routes within 4 hours of the instructed start time. All gritting vehicles will be checked and calibrated in accordance with BS1622:1989

All vehicles will contain electronic vehicle location systems together with automatic recording of salt spreading.

In the event of a breakdown repairs will be carried out within 2 hours and if required replacement vehicles will be provided within 24 hours.

All operatives shall receive suitable winter service training.

Sufficient and suitable equipment will be provided and maintained to treat footways as required.

Details of plant and resources will be made available in the Winter Service Operational Plan (Annex F)

9.0 Salt

Salt will be stored in a purpose built salt barn at Ashwell depot.

A minimum of 4,000T of salt will be held in stock at the start of the winter season.

Over the summer season, a salt stock review will be carried out by an approved body, as specified in the Winter Service Operational Plan, who will provide an accurate report of salt levels within the depot.

Salt levels will be automatically and electronically updated and monitored throughout the winter season.

Additional salt may be re-ordered if the level of salt falls below 1500 tons during the winter season.

6mm untreated rock salt will be used for carriageway gritting. The salt will be tested after delivery in accordance with BS 3247:1991 - Salt Spreading on Highways for Winter Maintenance.

Grit bins: will be filled with a 50/50 mixture of 6mm rock salt and sharp sand.

10.0 Weather Prediction and Information

10.1 Winter Risk Period

The winter risk period is from 1st October to the 30th April.

10.2 Forecast Arrangements

Weather forecasting services are to be provided by suitable forecaster, and forecasting accuracy statistics are reviewed on an annual basis. The target for accuracy is 95%.

Suitable records must be kept of all forecasts.

Weather station maintenance, data management and thermal mapping services are to be provided by a suitable supplier.

Information collected by the weather station and road sensor located on the A47 near Uppingham, is used by staff to monitor local conditions. This includes:

- Road Surface Temperature;
- Residual salt level/ expected freezing point;
- Dew point;
- Surface state (i.e. wet/dry/ice).
- Air temperature;
- Precipitation, type and levels;
- Wind speed and direction;
- Relative humidity.

10.3 Decision Making Process

Daily decisions on winter maintenance actions will be made by a suitably trained duty officer, depending on the forecast and with the aid of the flowchart shown in Annex D.

The flow chart and spread rates therein are derived from the National Winter Service Research Group Practical Guidance Documents (see Annex E)

Suitable electronic records must be kept of all decisions and actions.

11.0 Cross Border Agreement

As gritters may not be able to turn at the County boundary it is convenient to enter into agreements with neighbouring authorities to treat certain lengths of each other's networks. Responsibility for gritting for these sections of road will be transferred under a Section 8 Agreement (Highways Act 1980).

Electronic records will be kept of all cross-border arrangements.

12.0 Information and Publicity

Information on the winter service and gritting routes will be provided on the Council's website.

Winter service decisions will be communicated to all identified stakeholders by email, directly from the Winter Service Manager system.

Information on specific updates may be provided through the Council's social media channels during times of severe weather.

The public are encouraged to assist with snow clearing activities, and the Dft advice on how they can assist their communities can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/clear-snow-road-path-cycleway>

13.0 Winter Service Operational Plan

This Policy will be delivered through the provision of a Winter Service Operation Plan (see Annex F for the relevant version at the time of Policy publication).

14.0 Updating

This Policy will be updated if required due to changes in guidance or legislation, or at such time as required by Cabinet.

The Winter Service Operational Plan will be reviewed by the Strategic Director for Places, the Senior Highways Manger, and the relevant Portfolio holder on an annual basis.

The Plan may be brought back to Cabinet if changes are proposed which significantly alter the cost or level of service (greater than 10% increase).

A large print version of this document is available on request



Rutland
County Council

Rutland County Council
Catmose, Oakham, Rutland LE15 6HP

01572 722 577
enquiries@rutland.gov.uk
www.rutland.gov.uk