

B&NES Council Severe Winter Weather – Q&A

Why can't you salt every road in the area?

We simply don't have the storage space for the salt, or manpower to treat every road and must prioritise the routes on the network that are gritted. Priority is given to all the main roads, bus routes and other important roads, such as those leading to Hospitals. Our winter gritting is based upon the recommendations contained in a National Code of Practice – this comes to 261 miles of the network. If we gritted all roads there would not be enough for priority routes and people would not be able to travel safely on our key routes.

If the Council has gritted the road, why does snow still sit on the surface?

Getting salt down on the road surface in advance of snowfall is critical. Snow will settle on top of the salt. The action of passing traffic mixes the salt in with the snow and starts to turn it to a slush that passes through the highway drainage.

Can we have a grit bin in our street?

There are currently over 400 grit bins across the district in known trouble spots. Anyone can request a grit bin – but this will be judged against criteria, including the gradient of the location and the potential danger at road junctions. Grit bins are inspected at the start of winter and topped up with salt when necessary.

How should you spread salt from the bins?

Spread the salt as thinly as possible. Many people waste significant amounts of salt by over spreading. Under normal winter conditions a tablespoon of salt should treat 1m². Always clear the snow from the path/ road before you spread salt.

Do you grit pavements?

In very severe weather conditions consideration is given to the treatment of pedestrian routes. These would be confined to more urban areas where there is high pedestrian usage, such as shopping areas and will only be considered if snow or ice is likely to remain for several days.

Will you run out of salt if the severe weather is worse than 2010?

During times of heavy snowfall salt stocks across the country can diminish very quickly. All Councils are highly dependent on the national supply chain – only about 4 companies in the UK can meet the demands of local authorities. The Council has contingency plans to further prioritise salt stocks. We have created a 1000 tonne emergency reserve stock of salt and also developed arrangements with neighbouring Council's to help each other through mutual aid.

Why can't you get other staff to help clear ice?

We redeploy staff from other teams, like our Parks Team, to snow clearing duties. We also have a network of farmers who we pay to help clear snow from roads. This is particularly helpful in rural communities. The Council also provides a small plough which the farmer can fix to the tractor.