

## **WINTER MAINTENANCE - FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **How can I help?**

*Aberdeenshire Council wants to actively support members of the local community who wish to offer their spare time to clear snow from publicly-adopted footways and footpaths. Groups of volunteers are invited to join the Snow Warden Scheme where they can assist with the clearing of snow within an area of their local community. Please refer to the [Volunteer Snow Warden Welcome Pack](#) and the [Volunteer Snow Warden Scheme Training](#) for more details.*

### **What is gritting?**

*Gritting is the spreading of rock salt on roads and footways to reduce the likelihood of them freezing in cold weather. It is also the spreading of a grit/ salt mixture on compacted snow or ice.*

### **How does salt/ grit work?**

*Rock salt lowers the freezing point of water and therefore the melting point of ice which assists in keeping the roads and footways safer at low temperatures. However, it does not melt ice when temperatures fall below  $-8^{\circ}\text{C}$  and its effectiveness is significantly reduced when temperatures fall below  $-5^{\circ}\text{C}$ .*

*Rock salt attracts moisture from its environment. Through the process of being trafficked by pedestrians or vehicles, it is crushed and turned into a brine solution. It is this brine solution which is most effective in melting ice and preventing snow and ice from forming on and bonding to the road or footway surface.*

*Where ice has had a chance to form or where there is compacted snow on the road or footway surface, rock salt alone will be relatively ineffective and may make the situation worse by creating a thin film of water on top of the frozen surface. The rock salt is therefore mixed with grit to assist in providing traction whilst it works to melt the ice/ compacted snow.*

### **Which roads do you salt/ grit?**

*Due to limited resources, we are unable to grit every road in Aberdeenshire. We have therefore established a Primary Route Network consisting of 32 routes which are gritted in advance of icy conditions (precautionary treatment). The Primary Route Network maps can be found [here](#).*

*The Secondary Route Network consists of all other roads which are not included in the Primary Route Network. The roads which are prioritised on the secondary route network are those which link smaller villages to distributor roads, residential or industrial inter-connecting roads and those roads are on commercial bus routes. The Secondary Route Network is not gritted in advance of icy conditions (no precautionary treatment).*

*Regarding snow clearing, the Primary Route Network will be attended to first prior to attention being given to the Secondary Route Network. However, local farmers may assist with the Secondary Route Network prior to the Primary Route Network being complete therefore enabling us to deliver an enhanced service.*

### **Which footways do you grit?**

*Due to limited resources, we are unable to grit every footway in Aberdeenshire. We have therefore established four classifications of footway all of which receive varying levels of treatment.*

*F1 and F2 footways should be kept in a safe condition for pedestrians other than in storm conditions. F1 footways comprise main pedestrian routes in busy central areas of urban communities where there is a concentration of shopping and business/ commercial facilities. These will be gritted in accordance with the Footway Decision Flowchart which can be found in the [Winter Maintenance Operational Plan](#). Priority footways are categorised as F1 (Red) and F2 (Blue) as shown on the town plans listed [here](#).*

*F3 footways link residential and industrial areas to the busy central areas of larger urban communities and also main footways located in smaller towns and villages that do not have an F1/F2 network. These will also be gritted in accordance with the Footway Decision Flowchart.*

*F4 footways are footways serving only residential areas or industrial estates. These footways will not be gritted and will receive snow clearance only, depending on available resources.*

### **How do you decide when to grit/salt?**

*During the winter months Aberdeenshire Council have a Winter Operations Room that allows us to receive and process information from various sources on a 24-hour basis and react accordingly. To ensure that we have the best possible information we commission specialist weather forecasting services. In addition, we have a series of ice detection sites throughout the road network linked by computer to our Winter Operations Room providing real time information on road conditions. These information streams combined with local knowledge and expertise allow us to decide on the most*

appropriate treatment patterns required across our extensive network. Our Treatment Decision Flowcharts can be found in our Winter Maintenance Operational Plan [here](#).

**Are you responsible for gritting and snow clearing on all roads and footways in Aberdeenshire?**

No, we are not responsible for gritting and snow clearing on all roads in Aberdeenshire. Gritting and snow clearing on private roads and footpaths is the responsibility of the landowner(s)/ frontager(s). With regard to new developments which have not yet been adopted by the Council, responsibility for the gritting of the footways and carriageways lies with the developer unless they have submitted a [CC7 Form](#) after which the Council will treat the footways and carriageways in accordance with the [Winter Maintenance Operational Plan](#). Responsibility for the gritting of Trunk Roads such as the A90 and A96 lies with [Transport Scotland](#).

**Do you salt/ grit the roads to schools?**

Gritting and snow clearing shall take place at the access roads, bus turning areas and slip roads at the following schools: Alford Academy, Aboyne Academy, Banchory Academy, Banff Academy, Ellon Academy, Fraserburgh Academy, The Gordon Schools (Huntly), Inverurie Academy Kemnay Academy, Mackie Academy, Mearns Academy, Mintlaw Academy, Peterhead Academy, Turriff Academy and Westhill Academy.

Although the main focus in rural areas will be on clearing snow from public roads, assistance will be given with snow clearing at the access roads, bus turning areas and carpark entrances at other schools whenever snow ploughs or farmers' ploughs are in the vicinity and it is practical to do so.

**Do you salt/ grit at hospitals and health centres?**

No, we do not grit or clear snow at hospitals or health centres. This is the responsibility of the NHS.

**Do you salt/ grit minor roads?**

We do not salt/ grit minor roads in advance of icy conditions (no precautionary treatment). However, we may salt/ grit minor roads after or during an event once the Primary Route Network has been treated, as per the [Winter Maintenance Operational Plan](#).

**How do I arrange for my local grit bin to be filled?**

You can arrange for your local grit bin to be filled by following this [link](#).

**How do I request a grit bin?**

You can request a new grit bin by following this [link](#).

**Can I use salt/ grit from the grit bin on my driveway and/ or path?**

No, the salt/ grit provided in grit bins is for use on Council-adopted footways and carriageways only.

**What if there is an emergency or I need medical treatment?**

During office hours, please contact Aberdeenshire Council's Contact Centre on tel: 0345 608 1208 regarding any winter-related emergencies.

Outwith office hours, please contact Police Scotland who will contact Aberdeenshire Council on your behalf. For the purposes of clarification, an emergency is:

- Any "blue-light" emergency where the Emergency Services require assistance in responding to an incident;
- Attendance at road traffic accidents to assist the police in relation to the provision of road closures and traffic diversion routes;
- Clearing debris and treating oil spills that may constitute a hazard to road users;
- Assisting the medical profession to make urgent home visits to patients.

**Who do I contact if I have a winter-related query or request?**

Please check our website for winter-related information if you have any winter-related requests or queries. Otherwise, please contact Aberdeenshire Council's Contact Centre on tel: 0345 608 1208.