

Winter maintenance:

Clearing snow and ice from pavements and public spaces

Householders and businesses in the county are encouraged to clear snow and ice from pavements and public spaces. This guide provides information and advice to help you clear areas safely, and assist neighbours' who are unable to clear snow themselves.

Will I be held liable if someone falls on a path I have cleared?

There is no law preventing you from clearing snow and ice on the pavement outside your property, pathways to your property or public spaces.

It is very unlikely that you would face any legal liability, as long as you are careful, and use common sense to ensure that you do not make the pavement or pathway more dangerous than before. People using areas affected by snow and ice have responsibility to be careful themselves.

What can I do to help clear snow and ice from pavements and public spaces?

Our Highways department offers the following advice:

- Start early: it is much easier to remove fresh, loose snow rather than compacted ice that has been compressed by people walking on it.

- **Do not use hot water.** This will melt the snow, but may replace it with black ice, increasing the risk of injury.
- Be a good neighbour: some people may be unable to clear snow and ice on paths leading to, or fronting their property. Snowfall and cold weather can make gaining access to and from a property or walking to the shops extremely difficult.
- If shovelling snow, think about where you are putting it, so that it does not block people's paths or drainage channels. This could shift the problem elsewhere.
- Make a pathway down the middle of the area to be cleared first, so you have a clear surface to walk on. Then you can shovel the snow from the centre to the sides.
- Spreading salt on the area you have cleared will help to prevent ice forming. Table salt or dishwasher salt will work, but avoid spreading on plants or grass as it may damage them. A few grams (a tablespoon) for each square metre you clear should

work. The salt found in salting bins should mainly be used to keep roads clear.

- Particular care and attention should be given to steps and steep gradients to ensure snow and ice is removed. You might need to apply additional salt to these areas.
- Use the sun to your advantage. Removing the top layer of snow will allow the sun to melt any ice beneath; however you will need to cover any ice with salt to stop it refreezing overnight.
- If there is no salt available, then a little sand or ash is a reasonable substitute. It will not have the same de-icing properties as salt but should offer grip under foot.

Where can I find out more information about what to do in an emergency?

The Preparing for Emergencies web pages on Directgov contain useful information on how you can prepare for the impacts of all emergencies. The pages can be found at direct.gov.uk/preparingforemergencies