

Winter maintenance:

Frequently asked questions

1. Why is my road not gritted?

We can't grit all roads, but we have a list of our primary roads that we do grit, which gives priority to the busiest roads in order to avoid the most serious accidents. This includes the major A, B and about 75% of C roads, some 860 miles or 42% of the total road network. During snow and very severe icy conditions we treat an additional 130 miles of road (known as secondary roads), giving a total coverage of about 49% of our road network. We also give priority to roads leading to:

- hospitals, fire, ambulance and police stations;
- bus and railway stations and other public transport stations;
- main shopping areas, schools etc; and
- difficult sites (very steep hills etc).

Minor rural and urban roads are left to thaw naturally.

2. When is my road going to be gritted?

If your road is not on the primary or secondary road list it will not be gritted.

Our gritters treat the roads to try and stop frost and ice forming before temperatures fall below freezing. We schedule the gritting process based on the weather forecast. Where possible we try and plan the gritting operation to occur after the evening peak hours, or before the morning peak hours.

3. Can I see a map of which roads will be gritted?

We have compiled a map of roads that will be gritted during severe snow and ice. It will show the primary roads that will be gritted, and you can search by postcode to check the roads relevant to your journey. Some secondary roads may also be gritted, once primary roads are completed, but these are not shown on the map. You can find the map on eastsussex.gov.uk/winterroads

4. My road is on a steep hill leading to a busy junction. Why is it not gritted?

See question 1.

5. Why has one side of the road been gritted but not the side that my house is on?

The gritter only needs to drive along one side of the road, as the salt spreading mechanism is designed to deliver the salt across the full width of the road.

6. Why was your gritter going along the road but not treating it?

Our gritters follow a detailed route, so that they can grit the primary roads within a specific area. When designing this detailed route we take into account the length of road that the gritter can treat when it has been fully loaded with salt. To maximise efficiency and reduce the time taken to salt the roads, the gritter has to travel across some intersecting roads to be able to salt the primary roads. It is not feasible to salt these intersecting roads as the gritter would not have sufficient salt to treat the primary roads.

The gritter may be empty and returning to the depot after completing its run.

When the gritter lorry is using its snow ploughs, salt is not always applied.

7. Why don't you grit pavements?

We don't routinely salt footpaths or pavements. We have to prioritise major roads rather than pavements to prevent the most serious accidents. Hand salting of pavements will only be carried out if staff and equipment become available, with pavements in main shopping areas and busy urban areas treated as a priority. We encourage householders and businesses to help themselves by clearing snow and ice from public areas near their properties.

8. Can we have a grit bin?

We currently have over 750 bins spread around the county. We do not provide additional grit bins. However, we are working with district and borough councils, residents' associations and businesses to review the locations of grit bins, particularly where these organisations may wish to purchase

additional bins. (See Winter maintenance: provision of grit bins: ESH11)

9. When will you fill the grit bin?

We inspect and fill all of our grit bins in the autumn. If there is snow, the bins will only be re-filled if staff and equipment become available to undertake the work. The salt should be used very sparingly, as it does not aid grip but is supplied to assist in preventing the formation of ice and melting of snow. It is provided for use only on public roads and pavements, and should not be used or transported anywhere else. We do not refill grit bins on demand.

10. I'm not on the main gritting route but have an emergency. Can you come out and grit my road?

If there is a real emergency and we are requested to provide assistance by the emergency services, then we will respond positively.

11. Why don't you grit all roads leading to schools?

See questions 1.

12. Can I buy grit/salt from you? If not can you give me contact details for a grit supplier?

We do not provide salt to private individuals or businesses. Rock salt can be obtained from some builders' merchants and DIY stores.

13. My relative has run out of food and can't get to the shops. Can you grit the road please?

We do not have the resources to respond to individual requests to salt roads. Should anyone need advice or information on the support available for a vulnerable adult, they should contact Social Care Direct on 0345 60 80 191.

14. If I slip on an untreated pavement, who is liable? If I have an accident on an untreated road, who is liable?

If an accident occurs on either an untreated pavement or road, the individual concerned must prove that the County Council is liable. There is no automatic right to compensation and all claims will be treated as an insurance claim and assessed on the basis of the Council's legal responsibilities. Any claimant must be prepared to prove in a Court of Law that the Council's winter maintenance policy was not reasonably practical.

If a person wishes to pursue a claim then details of the incident can be provided to the Highways Contact Centre on 0345 60 80 193 or highways@eastsussex.gov.uk.

15. Should I be gritting the pavement outside my house?

Householders and businesses are encouraged to clear snow and ice from public areas near their properties during periods of severe winter weather. We also encourage people to assist neighbours' who may not be able to clear snow and ice themselves.

16. If I grit the pavement outside my house and someone slips can they sue me?

The prospect of a person, who has cleared snow from their pavement, being successfully sued by someone who has subsequently slipped on that pavement is very small. However, the snow-clearer has a duty to ensure that they clear the pavement with reasonable care so that they do not create a new or worse risk. As long as, in clearing the pavement, the resident has improved the condition of the pavement and made it safer to walk on than before it was cleared, they should not be liable if someone slips.

(See Winter maintenance: summary of policy 2010/11.)

17. A gritter sprayed onto my car and has caused damage. What can I do?

We use a small size of rock salt grit (6mm grading) which is extremely light and not very dense, and is unlikely to cause damage to vehicles. However, should a driver wish to pursue a claim then details should be provided to the Highways Contact Centre on: 0345 60 80 193 or highways@eastsussex.gov.uk. This will then be forwarded to our contractor who is responsible for the manner in which the gritting operations are carried out.

18. Will the bus service be running as normal with the ice on the road? How can I find out?

Bus companies are responsible for determining whether they are prepared to run a service. You will need to contact the bus company responsible for the route to determine if they are running the service.

19. How do I find out if schools are open?

- Local radio broadcasts school closures.
- You can subscribe to our email system or RSS alerts on eastsussex.gov.uk/schoolclosurealert for individual school closures.
- visit our website at eastsussex.gov.uk
- Your child's school website will also carry information about closures.