



Winter Fact Sheet

Which roads do we grit?

We give priority to roads carrying the most traffic and the main routes between populated areas. During periods of heavy snow, we clear and treat routes in priority order, starting with A roads.

We have two types of gritting routes: *Primary routes*, these are roads that are normally salted during winter. They consist of all A and B roads and about 75% of the C roads, which are the most heavily used roads in the county. They would normally be treated when the road surface temperature falls close to or below freezing or when there is a forecast of snow.

Secondary routes, these roads are not normally salted unless snow or severe icy conditions are forecast. They tend to include link roads into a village, hamlet, urban estate and main feeder roads to local hospitals



When do we put grit down?

Gritting the road at the right time is crucial. We use the latest weather forecasting technology to decide what is required to protect the roads and we monitor road surface temperatures to decide where and when to put grit down.

This can be in the evening or early mornings, to try and limit the likelihood of frost/ice forming on the road. It is for this reason that most gritting operations go unnoticed.

Advice for winter driving

- Before setting out, consider whether your journey is really essential
- Check local radio for travel information, including weather forecasts
- Drive as safely as the conditions allow
- Treated roads can still be icy
- Leave more time for your journey
- Make your signals clear and visible
- Carefully test your brakes after going through deep water. Braking lightly will help them dry out.
- Always be aware of debris on the roads, especially during and after stormy conditions
- Give snow ploughs and gritting lorries plenty of room

Why do we grit the Roads?

Grit is another name for rock salt. It helps to keep our roads safe by reducing the risk of ice. The grit works by lowering the temperature at which water freezes. It relies on the action of vehicle tyres to spread it over the road.

Gritter fleet and response times

When primary routes need salting it takes an hour for the gritters to start work. This allows for drivers to get to a depot, load the salt and refuel the vehicle. It will then take up to three hours to treat all of the roads within the primary routes.

Please remember

- It takes time for grit to become effective after roads have been treated
- Rain can wash grit off the roads leaving them prone to re-icing
- Should rain turn to snow during busy travel periods we cannot put down grit as the gritters can be held up due to traffic moving very slowly
- When temperatures are below minus 5°C grit is less effective

Gritting Facts
Our winter gritting season runs from 1 October until 30 April.
We operate a fleet of 24 gritters and keep two spares in case of breakdowns or accidents.
Each gritter operates on a pre-planned route that takes approximately two to three hours to complete.
Salt is stored under cover and we can store up to 15,000 tonnes at our six depots.
Rock salt provides no friction/abrasion, it simply prevents the formation of ice on the carriageway and aids the melting of snow and ice.
Salt alone doesn't remove/melt snow, it relies on traffic to churn the snow.
We treat 860 miles of highway, a mixture of A, B, C and unclassified roads, amounting to 42% of the total road network. This is one of the highest percentages of treated road networks for a highway authority in the South East.
Our gritters operate from six depots: Ringmer, Sidley, Heathfield, Maresfield, Polegate and Cripps Corner.



Roadside grit bins

Roadside grit bins are located throughout the county so that pedestrians and motorists can help themselves by salting small areas of road or pavement. The salt is provided for use only on public roads and pavements only and should not be used or transported anywhere else.

We inspect and fill all East Sussex County Council owned grit bins during the autumn. We are unable to refill grit bins on demand, if there is snow, the bins will only be re-filled if staff and equipment are available to undertake this work.

Self Help

We encourage householders and businesses in East Sussex to clear snow and ice from public areas near their properties during periods of severe winter weather.

They are also encouraged to assist neighbours who may not be able to clear snow themselves.

- Do not use hot water. This will melt the snow, but may replace it with black ice, increasing the risk of injury.
- Start early. It is much easier to remove fresh, loose snow rather than compacted ice that has been compressed by people walking on it.
- If shovelling snow, think about where you are putting it so that it does not block people's paths or drainable channels. This could shift the problem elsewhere.
- Make a pathway down the middle of the area to be cleared first so that 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 it on plants or grass as it may damage them.
- 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.

Have a safe journey