



## Practical advice on how to deal with snow and ice and help keep Derbyshire moving

We are hoping public spirited residents across Derbyshire will be prepared to **"do their bit"** to help if, like last year, we experience severe wintry conditions.

There is a widespread fear held by members of the community that they risk being 'liable' if they clear snow from the footway outside their properties or business premises, which now appears largely imaginary and media driven. There is advice available on how to minimise the risk of legal action. This advice is written into the County Council's **"Winter Service Plan"** and says:

*"Provided that members of the public who clear snow and ice from pavements or minor roads near their property take reasonable care and apply a common sense approach in doing so, they are unlikely to find themselves being held liable if someone has an accident and is injured on the area they have cleared.*

*If members of the public take action to clear snow and ice they should ensure that they do not create any further hazards by doing so. For example:*

- *Do not clear ice using boiling water which then freezes over the surface of the road*
- *Do not clear an area leaving an obstructive mound of snow on the pavement*
- *Do not attempt to clear the snow if you feel that this will cause you physical difficulty*
- *Take reasonable care in all of the circumstances"*

Below is some practical advice to consider if you decide to have a go at clearing snow and ice from footways around your property.

People walking in snow and ice are expected to take reasonable care of themselves – and so should you. You should avoid creating another hazard and should use a safe and effective way of working as you go.

### ***Step 1 - Have you got what it takes?***

You will need a suitable shovel to move the snow and a supply of rock salt or table salt will work best to melt ice. Definitely no hot water or heating device or you risk creating a new hazard. The melted water may turn to black ice which is more slippery and difficult to see. The next

best thing to salt is sprinkling sand or ash to improve grip, although this won't help melt the snow and may need clearing later.

### ***Step 2 - Be seen – be safe***

Wear suitable, warm clothing and safe footwear and if you are working in poor visibility, you may wish to consider wearing a high visibility tabard or jacket. Whilst not essential if clearing the footway, it is a sensible precaution to undertake to ensure you are seen and safe in all circumstances. You may already keep one in a vehicle in case of breakdown or because you protect yourself when moving about on the public highway.

### ***Step 3 - Map it out***

Decide in advance where you are going to put the snow you clear from the pavement – so that it doesn't cause an access problem for neighbours or prevent melting snow reaching drains later. So keep access clear for paths, gateways, doors, drains and adjacent parked cars. (Salt will also damage grass and plants, so keep away from these if you can). Make sure you create a safe walkway for yourself to stand on as you go. You can always salt this first and then make the cleared area wider if needed. If any areas are steep or include steps, you will most likely need to apply more salt.

### ***Step 4 – Get up and go!***

Newly fallen loose snow is much easier to clear than compacted snow – so the job can be less of a task earlier in the day. If the day is clear

and bright, the sun can help melt any ice beneath.

### ***Step 5 - Shake it all about***

For best effect – shake salt onto the cleared area – about 40 grams per metre is about right. A good technique is to put the salt on your shovel and use a small trowel or spatula to “flick” the salt along the newly cleared area. The action of people walking on it will begin to help melt ice. If you can, cover the path with salt in the evening to stop it freezing overnight – but if you can only do this once, spread salt straight after your first clearing of snow.

### ***Step 6 - After care***

Your best efforts might need a top up later – further snowfalls may need a repeat effort – and low temperatures might need further applications of salt on newly formed icy patches.

### **Want to know more?**

**Derbyshire County Council's advice** is taken from our “Winter Service Plan” which can be found on our website at:

[http://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/images/Winter%20Service%20Policy\\_tcm9-149937.pdf](http://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/images/Winter%20Service%20Policy_tcm9-149937.pdf)

**Central Government advice on the “Snow Code”** can be found at:

[http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/NI1/Newroom/DG\\_191868](http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/NI1/Newroom/DG_191868)