

Let it Snow, Let it Snow, Let it Snow!

A Guide to Surviving the Snow and Cold Weather

In winter, snow and ice may make roads and pavements unsafe for both traffic and pedestrians.

There is no law stopping anyone from clearing snow and ice in public spaces, on the pavements and other routes.

It is highly unlikely that you would be sued for clearing snow and ice as long as you:

- ❖ Are careful.
- ❖ Use common sense to make sure that you don't make a pavement or pathway clearly more dangerous than before.

The best way to clear snow and ice safely

- ❖ Start early - it is much easier to clear fresh, loose snow compared to compacted ice that has been compressed by people walking on it.
- ❖ Don't use hot water - this may melt the snow, but it may be replaced with black ice, increasing the risk of injury.
- ❖ Think where you are going to put cleared snow and ice, so that you don't block other routes or drainage channels.
- ❖ Make a pathway down the middle first, so you have a cleared surface to walk on.
- ❖ Spread some salt on areas you have cleared to help stop ice forming. Table or dishwasher salt will work, or if not sand or ash will do.
- ❖ Pay particular attention when clearing steps and steep gradients.
- ❖ Use the sun to your advantage - removing the top layer of snow will allow the sun to melt any ice beneath. Remember to cover any ice with salt to stop it refreezing overnight.
- ❖ Be a good neighbour - some people may be less able to safely clear snow and ice.

Roads

- ❖ OCC will salt priority roads and will work with the Emergency Services to ensure that all key services are prepared and priority routes are kept open.

- ❖ Requests will be considered to keep non-priority routes to schools and hospitals salted.
- ❖ OCC will fill all 'highway' salt bins once at the beginning of the winter season (salt in these bins is for use on the highways only).
- ❖ OCC do not salt pavements and car parks, or some minor routes (although they do liaise with other agencies and the bus companies to minimise the impact on pedestrians and public transport users).

Schools

- ❖ Schools should have established snow plans and have made their own arrangements to clear their sites.
- ❖ In deciding whether it is possible to open, the presumption will be that schools should remain open unless there are good reasons for them not to be.

Protecting the needy and vulnerable

- ❖ OCC will prioritise services for those most in need.
- ❖ Call regularly on elderly friends, neighbours and relatives to see if they need any help in staying warm or getting provisions.
- ❖ The elderly should be encouraged to keep moving and not sit still for more than an hour at a time, eat at least one hot healthy meal a day and have plenty of hot drinks.
- ❖ Have a hot drink before bed or take a flask to bed.
- ❖ If you have general concerns about a homeless person in the cold weather contact SODC who will be able to help, out of hours if you have a serious concern contact the police.

At Home

- ❖ Stock up on essential supplies - have enough food and medical supplies in stock for a fortnight.
- ❖ Ensure that you have enough heating oil at the start of winter and candles / torches (with fresh batteries) in case of power failure.
- ❖ Acquire your own small supply of salt; normal household salt or dishwasher salt will also do the job. A little can go a long way. Most builders merchants and DIY stores also sell de-icing salt.

Driving

- ❖ Only travel if it is essential, make use of 4x4s, snow tyres or chains (if you own a 4x4 consider joining a response group - www.4x4response.info).
- ❖ Check with Local and National Radio for travel information and weather forecasts, plan your route and allow extra time for journeys if necessary. Check conditions on the road ahead using the Highways Agency Traffic Information Points at service areas and other venues.
- ❖ Ensure tyres are inflated to the manufacturers recommended level, windscreen wipers and heaters are working correctly, lights are clean and in full working order, washer bottles are full and contain a suitable additive to prevent freezing, the battery is in good condition, topped up and fully charged and that your anti-freeze is at the correct level.

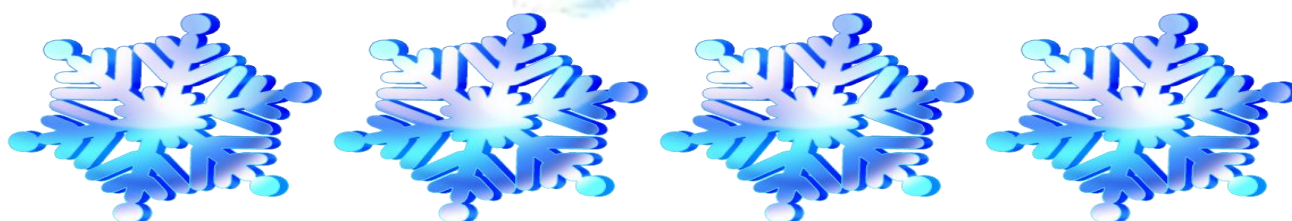
- ❖ Before driving off, remove as much snow as possible from your vehicle and ensure your windows and mirrors are completely clear of ice and condensation.
- ❖ Carry a can of de-icer, scraper, jump leads, warning triangle, first aid kit, map, blanket, torch, a brightly coloured scarf, a sign that says **HELP** in bright letters and a shovel.
- ❖ If your vehicle is not garaged, cover its windscreen and bonnet at night to prevent freezing.
- ❖ Ensure that before you travel you have warm waterproof outdoor clothing, a mobile phone, any medication regularly required, chocolate, sunglasses (snow glare) and a flask with a hot drink or soup.
- ❖ Drive to suit the weather conditions, be aware of ice, stopping can take up to ten times longer, and if you start to skid press the clutch, steer into the skid and as you straighten steer back along the road.
- ❖ Watch out for other road users and be prepared to help if you see a broken down or stranded vehicle.
- ❖ If your vehicle breaks down or you get stuck in the snow, do not leave it - it will get noticed before you will. Put a Help sign in the window, tie a brightly coloured headscarf to the aerial, turn off the engine and wrap yourself in a blanket. Don't run the cars engine for more than a few minutes at a time and make sure that the exhaust is not covered by snow.

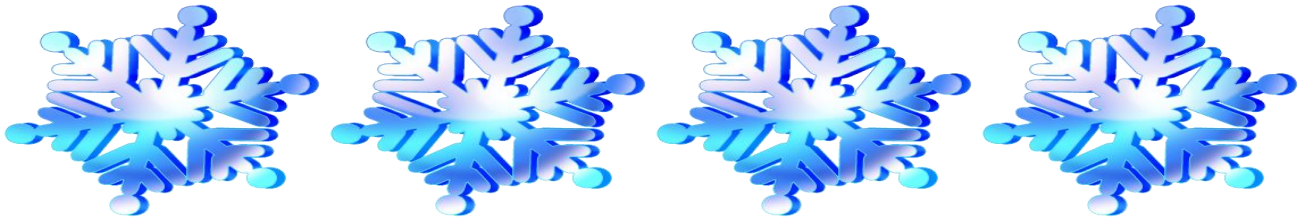
Out and about

- ❖ If you slip or have a fall the initial treatment should follow the RICE procedure:
 - Rest the injured part
 - Ice - apply ice or a cold pad to the injured area
 - Comfortably support the injury using a bandage or soft padding
 - Elevate the injured partSeek medical help if you feel the injury may be serious.
- ❖ Prevent risk of Hypothermia and Frostbite by avoiding prolonged exposure to the cold.

Residents Volunteer Snow Clearing Group

Over the last few winters a group of Henley residents have volunteered to help clear snow and provide safer pavements in and around the town centre. If you would like to join this group of volunteers contact either Tom Campbell 01491 574251 or Allan Follett (Lions Club of Henley) 01491 574415 e-mail: allan.follett@tesco.net





Contact Details / Further Information

Age UK - www.ageuk.org.uk/health-wellbeing

Direct Gov - www.direct.gov.uk

Emergencies (Police / Fire / Ambulance) 999

Police (non emergency) - 0845 8505505

Homeless Link Website - www.homeless.org.uk

Neighbourhood Watch - www.mynhw.co.uk

NHS Direct - www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk

Red Cross - www.redcross.org.uk

Volunteering - www.volunteering.org.uk

4x4 drivers - www.4x4responce.info

Thames Water - www.thameswater.co.uk

Henley Town Council - 01491 576982 - www.henleytowncouncil.gov.uk

South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC) - 01491 823000 -
www.southoxon.gov.uk

Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) - 0845 3101111 -
www.oxfordshire.gov.uk

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