

CARDIFF COUNCIL

CODE OF GUIDANCE

SNOW AND ICE

This Code of Guidance provides advice on how to minimise the risks to employees and other persons from snow and ice whilst on Council premises

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1.0 Legal Background

The Council has a general duty under the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 and the Occupiers Liability Acts (1957 and 1984) to ensure the safety of employees, customers and visitors on its premises. This duty extends to the provision of a safe access to and egress from all Council premises.

The Approved Code of Practice which supports the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992 states that adequate arrangements should be made to minimise risks from snow and/or ice on access and egress routes.

2.0 Premises Management Responsibilities

Employees with responsibility for management of Council premises must ensure that adequate arrangements are made to ensure the risks from snow and ice are minimised. All efforts should be made to ensure the establishment remains open as normal.

Develop a Plan

- Undertake and record a suitable and sufficient risk assessment in advance, covering the hazards associated with snow and/or ice on the premises.
- Ensure employees are aware of the risk assessment and action plan in place for snow and/or ice and are reminded of their responsibilities for following the designated paths and access routes when such conditions exist.
- Identify the main pedestrian and vehicle routes which will be cleared of snow and ice to provide safe access and egress (this includes the application of grit / salt to the ground and safe removal of any larger icicles or accumulations of snow over the access routes / areas e.g. from doorways, roofs, signs etc)

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- Pay particular attention to higher risk areas such as slopes, gradients and steps
- Suitably visible 'Slippery surface' or 'Caution wet floor' signs will need to be put in entrance foyers as these are likely to be slippery.
- Plan for a sufficient quantity of grit / salt supplies to be available for use at site when required.
- Include repeat treatments/clearance of identified key routes / areas as necessary through the period of severe / adverse weather
- Incorporate regular reviews of the safety of the site proportionate to the conditions being experienced e.g. the more severe / adverse the weather the more frequent checks to be made.
- Access to untreated areas should be restricted until it is considered safe to do so e.g. steps and gradients
- Snow and ice increases the potential load on canopies and supported structures. To avoid damage to these structures where there is a significant accumulation, and if it is safe to do so, these accumulations should be removed. Inspections should be carried out by a competent person for any signs of damage after the adverse weather has cleared. An inspection can be arranged via Development, Projects & Partnerships and the contact telephone number is 02920 78 8039.
- Ensure regular communication of situations to all persons that may be affected (including parents etc, in the case of schools)
- Prior to the winter season, stocks of materials and the location of tools should be checked. Re-briefing the plan with employees should also be done at this time.
- Consideration needs to be given to the needs of all people including those with particular needs, e.g. the frail, elderly, disabled, children etc.
- If warning cones or signs are used, these need to be removed once the hazard has gone.
- Agree in advance who will make the decision, and under what circumstances, to close any premises if it becomes necessary.

Where facilities are closed due to the weather conditions, suitable signage should be securely positioned as close as possible to the main access and any other access routes to advise all persons affected.

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3.0 Clearing Snow and Ice

- Implement the plan

External areas should be considered for clearance and/or gritted in the following priority order:

- Main pathway to public entrances.
 - Clear a path that is a minimum of a metre wide. Any slopes and steps to access the main entrance should be treated as priority.
 - Pathway to staff entrance (if different)
 - At least one pathway leading to or from a car park attached to the premises
 - Other pathways leading towards the main entrance
 - The car park, if required.
- Snow and ice clearing should be undertaken by Council employees subject to a suitable and sufficient risk assessment being in place and appropriate instruction and information having been given. Snow clearing can be very physical work and, depending on the size of the area that requires clearing, a specific Manual Handling Risk Assessment may be required. This should determine the safest method of undertaking the task to avoid injury and detail the appropriate equipment and personal protective equipment (PPE) to be used. Managers need to be made aware by employees of any pre-existing medical condition which may preclude them from assisting with clearance and ensure the activity is within an employee's capabilities.
 - Clear the snow and/or grit ice early in the day as it's easier to move fresh, loose snow rather than compacted snow. If possible, remove overnight snow first thing in the morning as any sunshine during the day will help melt any ice formed beneath. To avoid cleared areas refreezing, re-apply salt/grit on a regular basis.
 - When shovelling snow, place it so it does not create further hazards such as blocking roads and walkways.
 - Ensure staff have access to appropriate equipment, materials and PPE
 - Make sure staff take regular breaks when snow clearing – it is important that people go inside and warm up.
 - Areas subject to snow clearance can become slippery afterwards. Grit/salt should be applied to cleared areas. The use of manually operated wheeled grit/salt spreaders will enable grit/salt to be spread evenly and avoid unstable piles of grit/salt being placed on walkways.
 - Slush or water from thawed snow/ice should be cleared wherever possible to prevent re-icing. Iced slush can be more dangerous than the initial fall as surfaces may be uneven and more slippery.

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- Snow and icicles can form on roofs, guttering and canopies and may need to be safely removed to avoid structural damage or hazards from falling materials. The area beneath should be cordoned off and care taken when carrying out this activity.
- Keep a record of how the plan has been implemented, what has been done, where, why, when and by whom. This is important detail that may need to be produced to investigating bodies and/or insurers in the event of an accident.

4.0 Suitable and Sufficient Equipment and Materials

As identified by the necessary risk assessments equipment and materials may include, but not be limited to:

- A sufficient supply of grit or salt. Make sure the supplier is given adequate time to deliver
- Appropriate storage for grit/salt so it will not be washed away when it rains during the remainder of the year. Grit/salt bin(s) should be placed in an accessible location near to the identified priority areas. If necessary, padlock the bin but ensure employees required to undertake clearance know where to obtain the key.
- Consider the size of any shovel or hand held plough type equipment provided – lightening the load reduces the strain on the stomach, back and abdominal muscles, and helps prevent over exertion
- A stiff bristle sweeping brush
- Wheeled grit/salt spreaders to enable even and economical spreading of grit/salt
- Mats made available to be placed at entrances to reduce the risk of slipping due to transfer of snow/grit/water into premises.
- Suitable work wear when undertaking clearance tasks e.g. high visibility clothing, wet weather gear, waterproof footwear
- Facilities for drying clothing
- Appropriate signage – slippery surface etc

5.0 Monitoring

Once the plan has been implemented it should be regularly reviewed, monitored and updated to ensure the safety of premises users, customers, employees and visitors to the premises.

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6.0 Further Information

Health and Safety Advisers, Corporate Services – 02920 872635

Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974.

Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 (as amended)

Workplace (Health, Safety and Workplace) Regulations 1992

HSE – Health and Safety Executive website

Cardiff Council Severe Weather Conditions-Guidance Note 5.7.177

Cardiff Council Circular for Head teachers & Governing Bodies – Closure to Pupils and Staff/Emergency Procedures and Media Protocol HT&GB 02/5

Opening schools in extreme bad weather WAG information document No. 093/2010

Cardiff Council Code of Guidance - Accident Reporting

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