

# A Guide to Winter Services

## Operations



The Winter Service is important in terms of both the economy and road safety. It is carried out to allow the safe movement of road users including buses, cyclists, motorcyclists and pedestrians. It is economically significant because of the delays that bad weather can cause.

## Legal Background

The Roads (Scotland) Act 1984 provides the Council as Roads Authority with duties and powers to *“take such steps as they consider reasonable to prevent snow and ice endangering the safe passage of pedestrians and vehicles over public roads”*.

## Policy

Dumfries and Galloway Council's Roads Service will provide an effective and efficient, customer focused Winter Service that, within the available resources and on a prioritised basis, will:

- Prevent snow and ice endangering the safe passage of users of the Council's road, cycle, and pedestrian network; and
- Keep delays, closures, diversions, and inconvenience to a minimum during adverse winter conditions.

We do this by:

- Interpretation of forecasts
- Decision making on treatment required
- Implementation of the Winter Service Plan

When allocating available resources, keeping schools open/operating normally is a formal priority for Dumfries and Galloway Council in periods of significantly adverse weather.

## Salting

As operational and financial resources are finite, the Council's carriageway and footway networks have been assessed against objective criteria and are prioritised into a series of treatment categories. There are 18 Primary Routes and 10 Secondary Routes.

- Primary precautionary salting routes are treated proactively to prevent ice formation
- Secondary Salting Routes are treated reactively (resources dependant) and when significantly adverse conditions are anticipated to persist well into the period 8.00am or after 6.00pm.
- We aim to get the gritters on the roads within an hour of taking the decision to salt roads.
- Precautionary salting will be completed within three hours except for a few of the more remote rural roads.
- Minor roads will be treated only during prolonged periods of bad weather and as conditions dictate.
- Main bus and travel to work routes in town will be treated early when this is necessary.

## Snow Clearance

Snow clearing will be carried out to similar priorities as the salting, with the exception that:

- Response and treatment times will be longer.
- Following completion of Primary routes, priority will be given to opening at least one route serving each rural community.
- The clearance of snow on minor roads will normally be restricted to daylight hours.

During severe weather conditions the Council will work closely with the Police and Transport Scotland, to ensure that, the response is coordinated across the Region.

## Trunk Roads

We are not responsible for all roads within the region. Trunk Roads are the responsibility of Transport Scotland. The M74 motorway is managed and maintained by Autolink; A75, A76, A701, A77 and A751 are managed and maintained by Amey South-West Unit; A7T is managed and maintained by Bear Scotland. The Council and Transport Scotland's Agents have agreed that they will assist each other in the event of severe weather.

## Equipment

In Winter Service Operations Dumfries and Galloway Council uses 17 Tonne and 26 Tonne lorries equipped with spreading equipment (gritter bodies). All of these lorries can be fitted with snowplough blades which are mounted when snow is expected.



## We advise that you:

- Check your route and the weather forecast before you travel. You can check Track My Gritter on the Dumfries and Galloway Council webpage for our road network, and weather station cameras on Traffic Scotland webpage for trunk roads.
- Keep listening to the travel news while you are on the road.
- Make sure you are prepared with a winter weather kit - including warm clothes, boots, food, and drink, de-icer, and an ice scraper.
- Don't drive in severe weather unless your journey is absolutely essential - delay your journey until the weather improves. Never assume that just because a road has been treated that it is safe, drive carefully.

Dumfries and Galloway Council helps to support local resilience groups and are happy to provide advice and funding towards equipment if necessary



## Never assume a road has been salted



# Top Tips for Clearing Snow

There is no law preventing members of the public from clearing the snow and ice on the pavement outside their properties, or pathways to their property or public spaces. But care and caution should be taken when attempting to undertake any snow clearing to ensure further hazards are not created through careless or inconsiderate actions.



## Our advice on clearing pathways yourself is:

- Do not use hot water as this could freeze, increasing the risk of injury.
- Choose suitable clothing for the task to ensure that you remain warm, clearly visible to traffic and that footwear provides a good grip.
- Do not take unnecessary risks in the road and be aware that vehicles may find it difficult to stop quickly in icy conditions.
- If shovelling snow consider where you are going to put it to avoid shifting the problem elsewhere e.g., avoid blocking other paths and drainage features such as gullies.

**Be considerate and only take what grit you need.**

# Top Tips for Clearing Snow

- Use a shovel with a wide blade and do not overload the shovel with snow.
- It is easier to remove fresh snow before pedestrians have compressed the snow into compacted ice.
- Clear a line down the middle of the area to be cleared first to create a safer surface to work from.
- Spread some salt on the area cleared to prevent the formation of ice.
- Do not use too much salt as a few grams, about a tablespoon, for each square metre that you clear should be sufficient.
- If there is no salt available than a little sand or ash is a reasonable substitute, it will not have the same de-icing properties as salt but will improve grip underfoot.
- Salt applied to the footway could be washed away by rain or snow and subsequently freeze – in this case a further application of salt should be used soon after any rain has ceased and before temperatures approach freezing.
- Particular care and attention should be given to steps and steep gradients to ensure that snow and ice is removed – it may be beneficial to apply additional salt at these locations to reduce the risk of injury.



# Safe Winter Driving



**POLICE**  
**SCOTLAND**  
Keeping people safe  
**POILEAS ALBA**

It is the responsibility of all motorists to drive their vehicles in accordance with the prevailing road and weather conditions. Care must be taken at all times. **IF CONDITIONS ARE POOR - SLOW DOWN.**

and take greater care. While good vehicle maintenance and road treatment may reduce the chances of a crash taking place, most occur due to either inappropriate speed or driver error. Motorists are therefore reminded that it is largely their behaviour which will determine whether or not they have a safe journey.

The Chief Constable has the following advice to assist drivers during adverse winter weather:

- Check the weather forecast the night before and allow additional time for your journey.
- Prepare yourself and your vehicle before you drive.
- Don't take risks. Keep an eye on the weather forecast and try to use roads which are likely to be gritted.
- Don't use roads which have been closed - you will put yourself and others in danger and abandoned vehicles hamper snow clearance operations.
- Don't follow another vehicle too closely on ice or snow-covered surfaces.
- Reduce speed, steer gently and apply brakes evenly.
- Take much more care than usual when overtaking.
- When driving in falling snow, use dipped headlights.
- After a very cold, dry night with temperatures below freezing, always expect black ice on the surface.
- If your tyres won't grip you may find a grit bin or grit heap nearby. Spread the grit in front of your driving wheels and set off gently in the highest gear you can. Don't stop until you reach firm ground.
- Remember even main roads may not have been treated - drive carefully even when you think a road has been salted.

## Contacts

Dumfries and Galloway Council (24 Hour contact) **030 33 33 3000**

**For issues relating to trunk roads and motorways contact:**

Traffic Scotland (0800 028 1414) for all trunk roads within the region including A74(M)

## Useful Links

You can sign up to our Facebook page to receive daily updates throughout the winter period at **[www.facebook.com/DumfriesGallowayCouncil](https://www.facebook.com/DumfriesGallowayCouncil)**

## Further information on:

Council's policy on winter operations, Track My Gritter, find my nearest grit bin, how to report grit bin needing filled:

**<https://dumgal.grittertracker.co.uk/dumgal/Home/Map>**

School closures: **<https://info.dumgal.gov.uk/esc/home>**

Realtime updates via social media during emergencies or major incidents will be provided by Dumfries & Galloway VOST (Virtual Operations Support Team)

**[dg.vost.dumgal.gov.uk](https://dg.vost.dumgal.gov.uk)**

Help to prepare for emergencies: **[www.readyscotland.org](https://www.readyscotland.org)**

