



Princes Risborough Town Council

Winter Weather Policy

Introduction

Princes Risborough Town Council does not have a statutory duty to prepare for and deal with snow and ice (except around their own property) and although we do not have the resources to make a commitment to provide a snow clearing service we will endeavour to assist where practicable. This plan has been created to clarify what can be expected from the Town Council.

Legal advice

People have been hesitant to clear snow because of fears of litigation if someone should slip on the treated area. The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Occupiers' Liability Act 1984 place responsibility on the employer to maintain access to premises in a safe condition.

Although an employer can be held liable for 'failing to act reasonably' to prevent accidents, pedestrians also have a responsibility to take care.

"The prospects of a person who volunteers to clear snow from a pavement being successfully sued for damages by a person who subsequently slips on the cleared area and is injured are very small"

The snow code – tips on clearing snow and ice from pavements or public spaces

Don't be put off clearing paths because you're afraid someone will get injured. Remember, people walking on snow and ice have a responsibility to be careful themselves. Follow the advice below to make sure you clear the pathway safely and effectively. And don't believe the myths – it's unlikely you'll be sued or held legally responsible for any injuries if you have cleared the path carefully.

Clear the snow and ice early in the day

It's easier to move fresh, loose snow rather than hard snow that has packed together from people walking on it. So, if possible, start removing the snow and ice in the morning. If you remove the top layer of snow in the morning, any sunshine during the day will help melt any ice beneath. You can then cover the path with salt before nightfall to stop it refreezing overnight.

Preventing slips

Pay extra attention to clearing snow and ice from steps and steep pathways – you might need to use more salt on these areas.



Use salt or sand – not water

Don't make the pathways more dangerous by causing them to refreeze. If you use water to melt the snow, it may refreeze and turn to black ice. Black ice increases the risk of injuries as it is invisible and very slippery. You can melt snow or prevent black ice by spreading some salt on the area you have cleared. You can use ordinary table or dishwasher salt – a tablespoon for each square metre you clear should work.

Be careful not to spread salt on plants or grass as it may damage them.

If you don't have enough salt, you can also use sand or ash. These won't stop the path icing over as effectively as salt, but will provide good grip underfoot.

Take care where you move the snow

When shovelling snow, take care where you put it so it does not block paths or drains. Make sure you make a path down the middle of the area to be cleared first, so you have a clear surface to walk on. Then shovel the snow from the centre of the path to the sides.

Offer to clear your neighbour's paths

If your neighbour will have difficulty getting in or out of the home, offer to clear snow and ice around their property as well. Check that any elderly or disabled neighbours are alright in the cold weather. If you are worried about them, try contacting their relatives or friends.

Priority of clearance

During periods of severe/persistent frost, ice or snow the Town Council will endeavour to treat locations where the public have access to buildings in the Town Council ownership.

The first priority is to maintain the normal functions of the Town Council, so the area to be salted/gritted will be the main entrances to the Community Centre and fire exits.

It is not the Town Council's responsibility to grit public highways, private properties, public car parks or paths.

It should be noted that in extreme weather conditions where transport is difficult or dangerous it may not be possible to treat locations as staff themselves may have difficulty in reaching the locations. It is also to be noted that in very low temperatures the effectiveness of salt is significantly reduced.