

WINTER ROADS

Frequently Asked Questions

Under the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984 Councils as a Roads Authority have a statutory duty to “take such steps as they consider reasonable to prevent snow and ice endangering the safe passage of pedestrians and vehicles over public roads”.

Dumfries and Galloway Council’s Roads Service delivers a Winter Service to allow the safe movement of road users including buses, cyclists, motorcyclists, and pedestrians during the winter months. This service is important both in terms of road safety and the economy. Dumfries and Galloway Council is responsible for treatment of all roads on the [List of Public Roads](#).



We are not responsible for treating Trunk Roads and Motorways, these include:

- **A74(M) Carlisle to Glasgow Motorway** Autolink (Helpline 08457 966 666)
- **A75, A76, A77, A701, A751** Amey (0800 042 0188 – Option 4 South West Scotland)
- **A7** Bear (0800 028 1414 – Option 1 South East Unit)

Why does the Council not grit all the roads and footpaths?

Due to limited resources, we are unable to salt/grit every road in Dumfries and Galloway. The Council has, therefore, established a Primary Route Network of [18 Primary Precautionary Routes](#) covering 1,513.53km (940.46 miles). These primary routes are main routes to population centres, service bus routes, and heavily trafficked urban roads. These routes are salted/gritted in advance of icy conditions, based on the weather forecast we receive three times a day.

[10 Secondary Routes](#) on other classified roads, covering 736.42km (457.59 miles) are treated on a reactive basis when required, once the primary routes are completed.

Pavements are generally treated on a reactive basis as far as practicable once the clearance of main carriageways has been completed. These are prioritised based on use. Primary walking routes (**F1**), which generally serve busy shopping and business areas, along with main pedestrian routes are treated first. Dumfries town centre is treated whenever the primary road gritters for the area are called out. Secondary walking routes (**F2**) such as strategic cycleways and medium usage routes are carried out after the F1 routes are completed. Priority link and local access footways (**F3**) are treated once the F1 and F2 routes are complete.

How often are roads gritted and who decides when they are gritted?

Dumfries and Galloway Council uses a weather forecasting service along with road temperature sensors and decides to grit the network based on the forecast received. The decision to grit the road is taken by the Winter Duty Officer, who is on standby 24/7.

Are routes prioritised in the same way for icy conditions and snow events?

In general, yes. However, it does take longer to clear snow as the snow ploughs have to travel slower due to snow plough restrictions. Ice clearance is carried out in a single direction, snow clearance requires to be carried out in the reverse direction too.

How will I know if my road has been gritted?

Dumfries and Galloway Council has implemented a [Gritter Tracking](#) system which will show the movements of our gritters across the region.

Why can't you treat black ice promptly?

Generally black ice is the result of freezing rain and happens the instant the rain hits the frozen road. By the very nature of the event, rain will wash off any salt applied to a road, so we must calculate when best to treat the roads to minimise loss of salt and ensure successful, treatment of the route.

Why hasn't the pavement or pathways been treated in my housing authority scheme?

Social Landlords (DGHP, Loreburn, Cunninghamme, Irvine, etc) are responsible for treating the pavements, footpaths and car park at their properties.

Why did I pass a Gritter and it wasn't spreading?

All gritters are assigned specific routes. It may well be that the gritter you saw was on its way to its designated route or coming back from its allocated route and returning to the depot.

Why do I never see the Gritters out and about?

Gritting usually takes place later in the evening or early in the morning. Early morning runs can start as early as 3 or 4am, when most people are still in bed.

How do I request a refill of a grit bin or request a new grit bin?

New salt bins can be requested, or salt bins can be requested to be filled by contacting our Call Centre on 030 33 33 3000 or by visiting [Gritter Tracker](#). New salt bins will not normally be provided on primary precautionary salting routes or within 250m (273 yds) of an existing salt bin.

What Do I Do If My Vehicle Has Been Damaged By A Gritter?

In the event that your vehicle has been damaged by a gritter, follow the link for the procedure for [Making an insurance claim](#).

How You Can Help Us

If you would like to do your part to help us to keep your local community and the more vulnerable members safe in particular, you could clear snow and ice from paths, pavements or public spaces outside your home, shop, or office.

But please make sure you follow the Snow Code advice below to ensure you clear routes safely and effectively: -

Moving Snow – When moving snow think about where you are going to put it, to make sure it will not cause problems. Ensure you don't block other people's paths or the road and do not pile snow over gullies or drains as this may stop melting snow draining away.

Take Care - Take care when you're moving snow. First clear a small path down the middle of the area to be cleared, so you have a safe surface to walk on, then shovel the snow from the centre of the path to the sides.

Clear Snow & Ice Early in the Day - It's much easier to clear fresh snow than hard packed snow, so, if possible, start early 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 prevent the area from refreezing overnight by spreading some salt on the area you have cleared before nightfall.

Use Salt /Grit - Always use salt /grit when clearing routes to make sure that cleared routes will not refreeze. The use of hot water may melt the snow and ice but is very likely to refreeze turning to black ice, increasing the risk of injury.

Repeat Salt Spreading - It's important to repeat salt spreading as it can be washed away easily. A tablespoon per square meter of ordinary or dishwasher salt will work. Alternatively, if you don't have enough salt you can use a little sand or ash, these won't stop the freezing as well as salt but will provide grip underfoot

Prevent Slips - Pay extra attention to steps and steep slopes - to clear snow & ice from these areas additional salt should be used to reduce the risk of slipping.

Clothing - Make sure you wrap up warm and wear clothing which makes you visible and footwear which provides a good grip on slippery surfaces.

Be a Good Neighbour - Some people may be unable to clear their paths. If your neighbour has difficulty getting in and out of their home offer to clear their path for them. Please check in on more Check that vulnerable neighbours to make sure they are coping in the cold weather.

Further Information

Should you require further information, please contact our contact centre on 030 3333 3000. Please also see our winter maintenance leaflet 2021/22.