



News update from



Norfolk County Council

11 January 2017

Get prepared ahead of predicted wintry and stormy weather in Norfolk

Photos of Norfolk County Council gritter trucks are available to download via the link at the bottom of the press release.

Norfolk County Council is encouraging people to keep a close eye on the weather forecast over the next few days and be ready to react, as stormy and wintry weather is expected to arrive in the county from tomorrow (Thursday) afternoon.

The Met Office is warning that the east of England including most parts of Norfolk could get some snow between tomorrow and Saturday, with a chance of it settling and causing disruption to travel.

In addition to the prospect of snow, strong winds and low temperatures are also forecast over the next few days, with wind chill making it feel even colder. Road surface temperatures are due to dip below freezing on Thursday, Friday and Saturday night and therefore any rain or wintry showers that fall are likely to freeze, which could lead to icy roads, pavements and cycle paths and make journeys treacherous.

Norfolk County Council's gritting teams are going out at 7pm tonight (Wednesday) on all usual county gritting routes and are standing by to go out again at 3am if necessary as road surface temperatures are due to fall to around freezing across Norfolk overnight, with rain and sleet likely tomorrow. The gritters are ready to go out as often as required over the next few days.

The County Council currently has around 13,000 tonnes of salt stocked in the county. This is replenished throughout the winter as needed through a long-term contract the council has with its supplier Compass Minerals.

More than a third of Norfolk's roads totalling over 2,000 miles are on the council's 49 regular gritting routes, including all A and B-class roads and some C-class roads, and each route takes around three hours for a gritter lorry to treat. The A11, A47 and A12 are gritted by Highways England.

People can check which roads are on the council's gritting routes by looking at the map at www.norfolk.gov.uk/gritting. On the same map people can find the locations of the more than 1,800 grit bins in the county that are filled by the County Council and which people can use on public pavements, cycle paths and roads.

The specially formulated salt used to treat roads in Norfolk works by reducing the freezing point of water on the surface. However, even when roads are treated there is no guarantee they will be completely clear of ice or snow, and with a mix of wintry showers forecast over the next few days, some salt that is spread may be washed off the roads.

Martin Wilby, Chairman of Norfolk County Council's Environment, Development and Transport Committee, said: "Conditions over the next few days are likely to make everyday life more difficult for lots of people in Norfolk. Our highways team are well-practised at dealing with icy and snowy weather and they will work around the clock if needed to keep the roads on our gritting routes as safe as possible, but people should still be prepared for

potentially hazardous travel conditions.

“I would urge everyone to keep up to date with the latest weather and travel information at the moment so they can make an informed decision about the conditions before they travel anywhere. Please also consider checking on older or vulnerable relatives and friends who may find it harder to cope during cold and wintry weather.”

If you have to make a journey during wintry weather, the council’s road safety team has the following advice:

- Always drive to the conditions – slow right down and brake gently when road surfaces may have less grip.
- Leave plenty of extra time to make your journey – ‘drive to arrive’ and don’t take unnecessary risks.
- Make sure you allow time to clear your car of any snow before setting off, and remove ice from your windscreen and windows – don’t make travelling more treacherous by not having a good range of visibility or by snow sliding off your car onto the road and causing a hazard for other road users.
- People may want to plan their route to avoid any steep hills in snowy or icy conditions – rear wheel drive cars in particular can struggle with traction when driving uphill.
- If you skid on ice or snow, don’t brake and steer into the direction that the rear of your car is sliding.
- Most pavements and cycle paths in Norfolk are not gritted as standard (although there are 1,800 grit bins throughout the county stocked with salt for people to use on public spaces), so sometimes road surfaces may have more grip. Pedestrians and cyclists should also allow extra time for making journeys and wear shoes or boots with a thick tread.

People are also being asked to help each other by getting behind the County Council’s Norfolk Winter campaign, designed to help people in the county cope during the colder months. Regular gritting updates and other useful advice are posted on social media channels, using the #norfolkwinter hashtag on Twitter and on the Norfolk Facebook page (www.facebook.com/norfolkcc). Everyone in Norfolk is encouraged to share any information that may help keep people in the county safe when the weather is cold, icy or snowy.

Older people, very young children, pregnant women, those with long-term health conditions and people who live in poor quality housing or are homeless are particularly vulnerable during cold weather. While low temperatures themselves don’t usually directly make people ill, they can contribute to conditions that lead to illnesses including stroke and heart attack. Flu viruses are also more stable in cold air, making it easier for them to spread and leading to more cases of flu during the winter, which can be life-threatening to some vulnerable people.

Steps everyone can take to reduce the risk of older or vulnerable people falling ill include:

- Ensuring their home is well-heated and insulated – living in cold, damp or mouldy rooms can affect your health. Heat your home, or at the very least the rooms you use regularly, to between 18 and 21°C.
- Making sure they’re dressing appropriately for the cold, wearing layers, moving around regularly if possible and eating hot meals and drinking hot drinks.
- Checking that tasks like picking up prescriptions and buying food aren’t going undone because wintry weather is making it difficult for them to get out and about, and offer what support you can.
- Reducing their chance of falling over and resulting injury by strengthening muscles through exercise (a programme of sitting exercises can be found on the NHS website) and by having well-fitting footwear with good grip on the sole – in both shoes and slippers.
- Encouraging them to get the free flu jab if they are eligible for it – everyone aged 65 and over is offered the flu jab for free on the NHS, as are other ‘at risk’ groups.

For more information about keeping in good health during cold weather, visit www.norfolk.gov.uk/staywellthiswinter. Information on gritting, including a map of gritting routes and grit bin locations, can be found at www.norfolk.gov.uk/gritting. For the latest weather warnings covering Norfolk, visit www.metoffice.gov.uk/public/weather/warnings.

For political comment

Cllr Martin Wilby (Conservative) Chairman of the Environment, Development and Transport Committee, on 07920 286618 or 01379 741504

Cllr Jonathon Childs (UKIP) Vice Chair of the Environment, Development and Transport Committee, on 07899 037719 - text only

Cllr Terry Jermy (Labour) on 07742 157967

Cllr John Timewell (Liberal Democrat), on 07717 881857

Cllr Andrew Boswell (Green) on 07787 127881

For further information please contact:
Media Team at Norfolk County Council
Tel: 01603 228888
Email: pressoffice@norfolk.gov.uk



Norfolk County Council