

# Health and Safety – Guidance Sheet GS1

## **Snow and Ice Management – A Guide for Site Managers and Head Teachers**

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### **Introduction**

This guidance has been developed to assist Site Managers and Head Teachers to effectively manage the risks from snow and ice during periods of cold weather.

**This latest version has been issued to highlight the fact that a site's snow and ice management procedures may now have to be reviewed and updated to take into account control measures that may have been introduced at sites as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.**

For example, one-way systems for pedestrians may now have been implemented at sites to comply with social distancing requirements – this may be particularly true at schools with regards to parents dropping off / picking up pupils.

The introduction of such one-way systems, or other ways of managing pedestrian travel around the site to comply with social distancing requirements, may now mean that there are new pedestrian routes at the site which would not have been in place in previous years.

Any such new routes must now be taken into consideration in the site's snow and ice management procedures.

(Pedestrian routes should also be checked for slip trip / hazards other than snow and ice, for example, a build-up of fallen leaves / loose paving slabs. They should also be checked for other issues, such as ensuring handrails are fitted to steps where required, pedestrian routes are separated from vehicular routes and that there is adequate external lighting if the site is in use during the hours of darkness.

Furthermore, if new pedestrian routes introduced bring into use doors / gates that were not previously in use, ensure no new hazards are introduced as a result, for example, doors that may slam shut in the wind or finger trapping if doors / gates are used by young children in schools.)

## Role of Employer

Employers have a duty under health and safety legislation to take 'reasonable' steps to provide employees with a safe place of work, including safe access and exit routes to and from the place of work and around the work site, within the curtilage of a site – employers are not responsible for routes outside the curtilage of a site, such as public highways, roads, streets and pavements.

Employers also have a duty to ensure the safety of any visitors to the site. As referred to above, this may now include parents at some schools where access onto the site is the only practical means of controlling drop off / pick up of pupils whilst safely managing social distancing requirements.

## Role of Site Manager / Head Teachers

Site Managers who have a direct responsibility for Council premises, and Head Teachers of schools, must ensure that adequate arrangements are made to minimise the risks from snow and ice, to both employees and visitors, and that all reasonable steps are taken to enable the establishment to remain open as normal.

In order to do this, Site Managers / Head Teachers should:

1. **Ensure Risk Assessments are undertaken**, making use of existing data such as accident statistics and experience from previous years, and taking into consideration any new issues arising as a result of control measures implemented due to COVID-19.

Ensure you have a contingency plan in place if any route is taken out of use.

2. **Ensure a pre-winter inspection of the site is carried out**, paying particular attention to leaking gutters and pipes, especially where they are on pedestrian and vehicle routes. These should be repaired as a priority before the cold weather begins, to prevent ice forming.

Drains and watercourses should also be checked for blockages. Manhole, inspection chamber and surface water drain gulley covers should be in place to prevent trips / falls and to prevent items from falling in and blocking drains, and covers should also be in a good condition and fit properly into frames to prevent trips.

3. **Ensure routes for snow clearance / gritting are prioritised** with consideration given to using a colour-coded site plan highlighting the areas of priority, such as:
  - a. **Priority 1** (Highest) – main access routes, fire escape routes, steps, ramps;
  - b. **Priority 2** (Essential) – footpaths from car park to main building; and,
  - c. **Priority 3** (Desirable) – footpaths other than main access.

Ensure any new routes introduced as a result of COVID-19 control measures are taken into consideration.

4. **Ensure protocols are established** – for monitoring conditions and deciding on the frequency and timing of gritting, and whether areas of the site need to be closed off.
5. **Ensure Safe Systems of Work are developed:**
  - a. For use of gritting equipment, e.g. shovel, brush, grit spreader;
  - b. For clearing snow, to include:
    - what equipment should be used, i.e. shovel, brush;
    - how many persons should be involved in the activity, taking into account that if there are now more access / exit routes it will take more time to carry out the gritting; and,
    - specific instructions not to use hot water to de-ice routes.
6. **When deciding what type of equipment should be used, ensure the following points are considered:**
  - a. Is it adequate for purpose?
  - b. Where is it stored?
  - c. Who maintains it?
  - d. Who has access to it?
  - e. Is training required to use it?
7. **Delegate Responsibility for:**
  - a. Ordering salt / grit and monitoring supply levels;
  - b. Deciding when, and how frequently gritting takes place;
  - c. Carrying out gritting, clearing snow and ice, refilling grit bins; and,
  - d. Maintaining records of gritting / snow clearance undertaken.
8. **Ensure all persons involved in clearing snow and ice are issued with appropriate Personal Protective Equipment,** such as:
  - a. Protective gloves;
  - b. Footwear with good grip / tread on the sole; and,
  - c. High visibility and warm clothing.
9. **Where appropriate, provide suitable training for employees involved in snow and ice clearing activities,** such as:
  - a. Moving and handling training; and,

- b. Training in the use of equipment.
10. **Ensure appropriate storage of salt / grit is arranged**, as per manufacturer's / supplier's recommendations and at various locations on site.
11. **Ensure systems are developed to ensure effective circulation of information**, to employees, visitors and members of the public.

## **Responsibilities of Employees**

All employees have a duty to take care of their own safety. To minimise the risk of injury it is important employees adopt a common sense approach, such as:

- Walk, don't run;
- Wear footwear that is suitable for the conditions;
- Try to leave hands free to aid balance, and / or in the event of a slip / trip / fall, to help minimise the effects;
- Allow more time for your journey;
- Be mindful of slipping whilst walking, particularly when using steps and ramps;
- If driving, be mindful of skidding when leaving un-gritted car parks;
- Report hazardous conditions.

## **Further Reading and Guidance**

Regulation 12 of the *Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992*

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/l24.htm>

The Health and Safety Executive's guide: *Managing for health and safety (HSG 65)*

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/hsg65.htm>

Government produced guidance: *Clear snow from a road, path or cycleway*

<https://www.gov.uk/clear-snow-road-path-cycleway>

The Health and Safety Team's guidance document:

*School Caretaker Health and Safety Handbook: Issue 1, March 2019* (Welsh and English language versions are available from the Health and Safety Team).

In the event you have any queries relating to this guidance document, please contact the Health and Safety Team: by telephone 01443 425531; by email

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