

## Clearing snow and ice from pavements outside your premises

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**There's no law stopping you from clearing snow and ice on the pavement outside your premises, your home or from public spaces. It's unlikely that you will be sued or held legally responsible for any injuries on the path if you have cleared it carefully and responsibly. But ensure that you follow the snow code to clear snow and ice safely ...**

If you clear snow and ice yourself, be careful - don't make the pathways more dangerous by causing them to refreeze. But 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.

### Clear the snow or 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.

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

### Use salt or sand - not water

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 prevent black ice by spreading some salt on the area you have cleared. You can use ordinary table or dishwasher salt.

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

### Take care where you move the snow

When you are shovelling snow, take care where you put it so it doesn't block the path for other people 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.

### Last winter

The big story to come out of last winter's snow (January 2010) was the **warning from some health and safety experts not to clear pavements or you'll get sued.**

However, Rosi Edwards, Regional Director Midlands Health and Safety Executive (HSE), said "We think it is ridiculous that people should feel prevented from helping others, through a fear of being held responsible for an accident. I personally would love to see more people out there shovelling snow away and really appreciated the efforts of all my neighbours and local shopkeepers who did so".

"HSE encourages a common sense approach to health and safety, and is focused on the real safety risks at work. Slips and trips can have nasty consequences: nearly 11,000 workers suffered a serious injury as a result of a slip or trip at work last year" .

## Legislation

For businesses and other organisations, the wintry weather brings with it additional hazards to premises that must be managed. Slips and trips are the most common cause of winter work hazards. The Workplace Health Safety and Welfare Regulations 1992, Reg 12 Condition of floors and traffic routes state: "So far as is reasonably practicable, every floor in a workplace and every traffic route in a workplace shall be kept free from obstruction and any article or substance which may cause a person to slip, trip or fall."

The HSE Health Safety and Welfare Regulations - Approved Code of Practice, also states: "Arrangements should be made to minimise risks from snow and ice. This may involve gritting, snow clearing and/or the closure of some routes, particularly outside stair, ladders and exposed walkways."

All employers and businesses need to make sure that frequently used access paths which get covered with frost or snow are cleared, gritted or salted to help prevent people slipping. However, there is no need to clear an entire area of snow if the public or employees are unlikely to walk on it.

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