

Winter Service Policy

1. Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) is committed to providing a robust adverse weather service including responding to winter and other severe weather instances. The adverse weather service is provided by Oxfordshire County Council and its contracting partners, currently Skanska. The extent of the service provided will vary depending upon the severity and nature of adverse weather conditions and resource availability.
2. The statutory basis for winter service varies in different parts of the UK. In England and Wales Section 41 (1A) of the Highways Act 1980 was modified on 31st October 2003, by Section 111 of the Railways and Transport Act 2003. The first part of Section 41 reads

“a) The authority who are for the time being the highway authority for a highway maintainable at the public expense are under a duty, subject to subsections (2) and (3) below, to maintain the highway.

b) (1) In particular, a highway authority is under a duty to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that safe passage along a highway is not endangered by snow or ice.”
3. The Winter Service Procedure will provide a framework for the production of the Winter Service element of the Adverse Weather Operational Plan which will operate annually during the winter period, normally between 1st November and 31st March.

Policy: WSP1

The ‘precautionary salting’ of major routes through the County, which will include key transport hubs and routes that form the Resilient Network will take place in accordance with the criteria outlined in the winter procedure.

Policy: WSP2

The removal of snow from major routes through the County, which will include key transport hubs and routes that form the Resilient Network, will take place dynamically and will continue until the above network is free of obstruction.

Policy: WSP3

Pre- salting of Key footways and cycleways when snow is forecast will be carried out in line with the procedure to keep congestion, delays and incidents to a minimum.

Policy: WSP4

Post Salting-During extreme conditions where the risk of incidents is higher, we will only salt footways and cycleways following reports of hazardous conditions.

Policy: WSP5

The removal of snow from key Town Centre pedestrian areas - some of which may be undertaken by the District Councils or Town Councils will only be undertaken within 24 – 48 hrs of snow falling, or resources are available.

4. We will work with and encourage Parish and Town Councils to take an active role in the provision of winter services

Policy: WSP6

Oxfordshire County Council will work with Parish and Town Councils that wish to carry out their own Winter Service operations as part of helping communities to help themselves.

5. Further resource will be sought through Community Assistance and using individuals or organisations who have the capability and capacity to provide ancillary services that will support the activities of the council.

Policy: WSP7

Oxfordshire County Council will work with local communities including farmers for additional resilience during times of extreme winter weather. Residents are encouraged to clear footpaths outside their properties, with no liabilities.

Service Aims

Oxfordshire County Council will undertake a risk-based approach to the winter service, with the following minimum levels of service:

- Pre-salt approximately 43% of the Highway network to reduce the risk of the formation of ice and hoar frost
- To pre-salt each route within a 3-hour timeframe
- Clear snow from the above networks as soon as conditions and resources permit
- Pre-salt the pre-define key footway and cycleway network pre-snow
- Clear snow from key footway and cycle network as soon as conditions and resources permit
- Ensure cross boundary agreements with neighbouring authorities are in place pre-season
- Liaison with parish and town councils with regard to salt stocks for community resilience pre-season

Reference & Supporting Documents

- [Winter Service Procedure](#)
- [Adverse Weather Incident Response](#)
- [Adverse Weather Operational Plan](#)
- OCC Highways Asset Management Plan