

Norfolk County Council: Norfolk's gritters ready for action this winter

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Norfolk's gritters ready for action this winter

Link to images at bottom of press release

With winter having officially started, Norfolk's gritters are prepared for what could be the start of a busy period.

Norfolk County Council's fleet of gritting lorries is due to go out at 3am tomorrow morning (4 December) to treat routes in all areas of the county apart from the city and north coast with a specially formulated salt designed to prevent ice forming on the road surface.

More than a third of Norfolk's roads 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 final stretch of the Broadland Northway (A1270), which opened in spring, has been added to the county's gritting routes for this season. The A11 and A47 are gritted by Highways England.

Cllr Martin Wilby, Chairman of Norfolk County Council's Environment, Development and Transport Committee, said: "Last winter we faced extreme weather conditions when the Beast from the East struck. Our fleet of 56 gritter trucks was in almost continuous use during the period, gritting roads, clearing snow and helping to free stranded motorists.

"There's no way of telling whether we'll experience anything similar this winter but if it is another bad winter we are well-prepared, with plenty of salt and a contract that means we will continue to get topped up throughout the winter, no matter how much we need to use."

Every year when the weather gets cold, Norfolk County Council launches its Norfolk Winter information-sharing campaign, designed to help people in the county cope during the colder months. Regular gritting updates and other useful advice are posted on Norfolk County Council's social media channels, using the #NorfolkWinter hashtag on Twitter (www.twitter.com/norfolkcc) and on Facebook (www.facebook.com/norfolkcc).

People are being asked to help each other by getting behind the Norfolk Winter campaign and sharing any information that may help keep people in the county happy, healthy and safe when the weather is cold, icy or snowy.

Norfolk County Council currently has around 16,000 tonnes of salt stocked in the county. This will be replenished during the winter through a long-term contract the council has with its supplier Compass Minerals.

People can check which roads are on the council's gritting routes for the 2018/19 season on the map at www.norfolk.gov.uk/gritting. On the same map people can find the locations of around 1,900 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 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. For example, in severe cold weather (below approximately minus seven degrees Celsius) even salt will not prevent the roads from icing over.

Iain Temperton, Norfolk County Council's Road Safety Team Manager, said: "We often see a rise in the number of collisions on the roads as the first cold snap sets in and people aren't used to driving in the conditions. Make sure you leave enough time to travel to your destination and don't take unnecessary risks; slow right down and brake gently when road surfaces may have less grip. Tyres grip less efficiently in cold conditions - so even if the temperature is above zero and there's no ice on the road, you should take extra care."

For more information about the council's Norfolk Winter campaign, visit www.norfolk.gov.uk/norfolkwinter. For more information about gritting in Norfolk, visit www.norfolk.gov.uk/gritting.

- ENDS -

Notes for editors

Picture captions:

- Thanks to Norfolk's gritters - representatives from Norfolk County Council's highways winter maintenance team being thanked for their extraordinary efforts last winter
- Digger loading gritter in salt dome

Last winter:

- Norfolk County Council gritters completed 113 gritting runs (66% more than the previous year's 68)
- 25,000 tonnes of salt was spread on the county's roads by Norfolk County Council gritters (nearly double the previous year)
- Norfolk County Council gritters covered 50,000 miles in just one week during the 'Beast from the East'

For political comment

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

Cllr Terry Jermy (Labour) on 01842 630851

Cllr Tim East (Liberal Democrat) on 01603 743241

Cllr Mick Castle (Independent) on 07966 798928

For further information please contact:

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Attachments

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