



Severe Weather including Winter gritting

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Part A - Guidance for Managers

1. The Health & Safety issues relating to adverse weather conditions

During the different seasons, adverse weather conditions can create potentially hazardous situations for example snow/icy conditions, heat exposure, high winds and heavy rainfall.

Each year employees, contractors, pupils, visitors and service users are injured as a result of slipping and falling on ice and snow. As a consequence there are a number of issues that may





require the introduction and management of control measures as part of the risk assessment process.

These control measures may include:

- Clearance of ice and snow
- Gritting
- Ensuring safe access and egress
- Car parking facilities
- Traffic Management and protecting pedestrian routes
- Building entrances/exits
- Reorganisation of work activities
- Provision of adequate resources

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2. Adverse Weather Conditions to be considered as part of the risk assessment process

Ice and snow

All gritting should be confined within a site's boundaries. If a premises manager arranges for a public highway (area outside of their boundary) to be gritted it becomes their responsibility and a duty of care is owed to maintain the condition of the gritted area. However it may be appropriate for a premises manager to liaise with the local council to check on gritting arrangements.

Heads of establishments and premises managers are responsible for ensuring that the means of access to their establishment is safe for both employees and visitors. They must ensure that adequate arrangements are made so that the risks from snow and ice are minimised "*as far as is reasonably practicable*".

It is accepted that it is not possible to immediately remove every piece of snow or ice but those responsible for premises are required to exercise careful judgement and prioritise de-icing and salting of key access routes.

The approved code of practice that supports the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations states that "arrangements should be made to minimise risks from snow and ice." This may involve gritting, snow clearing and closure of some routes. Signage will be required to direct building users to the safe route.





Heavy Rainfall/flooding

Flooding is a potential hazard for individuals and can cause severe property damage, causing disruption to normal daily activities. An emergency plan should be in place if the threat of flood is likely. The plan must consider the health, safety and wellbeing of staff, pupils and visitors.

Periods of excessive heat

In times of excessive heat, individuals can suffer in the short term from sunburn, heat stroke and sometimes dehydration. However in the long term individuals need to be aware that too much exposure to the sun can increase the potential of developing skin cancer.

Some individuals may be more susceptible including persons with; fair or freckled skin that doesn't tan, or that goes red (burns before tanning); red or fair hair; and individuals with moles.

It is important to remember that the three or four hours around midday are when the sun is most intense, even on cloudy days Ultra Violet light can filter through.

A link to SunSmart webpage can be found on Lancashire County Council intranet, health and safety, A-Z, Sun safety. <http://www.sunsmart.org.uk/index.htm>

High Winds

During periods of high winds it is important to consider the potential impact this could have on services to the premises and the normal daily routines of the service. Heavy winds can cause chaos and leave premises without power and disrupt travel by road and rail.

Inevitably when the winds are high there is the potential for flying debris from roofs, gardens therefore any loose objects with the potential to cause damage/harm should be secured if possible, this could include ensuring that all doors and windows are fastened. When high winds are forecast some trees or branches may fall down. For your safety, stay away from fallen power lines, flooded areas and debris. However once the winds have died down, an inspection of any damage will have to be carried out to identify any remedial action required.

Guidance in relation to tree safety is available on the Lancashire County Council intranet site, Health and Safety; A-Z, Premises Management Guidance and Records, tree safety.

3. How to carry out an assessment of winter gritting and snow/ice clearance

Premises managers must ensure that a risk assessment is in place, as per the risk assessment guidelines. The person conducting this will need to have a sound knowledge of the work and be able to develop a plan of action on their findings along with appropriate control measures. The





premise manager is responsible for reviewing and revising the arrangements outlined in the risk assessment.

The procedure must include the following:

- Ensuring staff are made aware of their responsibilities and duties. It may be necessary for site staff to commence work earlier to implement the gritting/clearance plan.
- Identification of any resources required to complete the task including persons, time, grit, grit spreader, grit bins, shovels, trolley or wheel barrow and personal protective equipment. All the relevant information about any equipment to be used (manufacturers' instructions, user guidance etc.) should be consulted and users made aware of how to use equipment correctly and safely.
- Prioritisation of access routes that are most used or most important. Further consideration may be needed to relocate the fire assembly point temporarily if this cannot be accessed safely particularly in the event of a fire drill. In the event of a real emergency consideration should be given to the safest route to vacate the establishment for all persons.
- Ensuring that any staff undertaking the gritting activity are physically fit and capable of doing so and adequately trained in manual handling and other relevant techniques. A level of training can be obtained by completing the e-learning module on manual handling. This can be accessed via Employee Services Online (ESO).
- A requirement to regularly check the weather forecast for updates. Information can be accessed via the [Met Office](#) and the [Environment Agency](#)
- Discussion with the workforce any other issues; this could include:
 - Reminding staff to ensure that their cars are roadworthy or if a different means of transport may be more appropriate for travelling to and from work.
 - Reminding staff of their own health and safety responsibilities. This can provide reassurance and explain why the risk control procedures are important for the wellbeing of all.
- Ensuring any signage required is clearly visible demonstrating cleared routes and areas to be avoided.
- Arrangements for checking the conditions of the cleared paths at appropriate intervals to ensure continued safety (for example before peak times including start and end of the working day).
- Identification of any particular areas which require additional attention and need to be checked more frequently e.g. steps, slopes.
- Consideration and making arrangements for the needs of any persons with particular needs (disabled, elderly, children).
- Recording all the above points on the risk assessment form.





- The need to check regularly that the control measures you have put in place are appropriate and being carried out.

Part B - Guidance for Employees

What health effects/safety issues are associated with severe weather conditions?

1. Who is at risk?

Adverse weather conditions can affect all persons within the establishment whether they are Lancashire County Council employees, students or visitors. However some groups of people may be more vulnerable to the risks attributed to adverse weather conditions including children, pregnant women and disabled persons.

2. What is the risk?

Snow/Ice:

Slips and Trips: Staff, pupils, service users etc. should be advised to wear appropriate footwear i.e. with a good grip and no heels. The premises manager will make every effort to ensure the essential areas within the site boundaries are cleared and/or gritted where possible and that these routes are adequately signed.

Manual Handling Injuries: Anyone carrying out the activity of clearing the ice/snow and gritting should be trained and competent in manual handling techniques and be supplied with appropriate PPE if necessary

Risks associated with transport: Those commuting to the school/establishment e.g. pupils, staff, service-users take responsibility for their own safety and wellbeing on the journey to and from work/school etc. However if travelling by car they should be reminded to ensure that it is roadworthy and they should allow sufficient time for the commute into work/school etc. considering alternative modes of transport if applicable.

Heat:

Dehydration can be suffered in times of excessive heat if insufficient fluids are taken. Drinking water should be available for all employees, visitors and general building users.

Staff, pupils, service users etc. working outside the premises or involved in outdoor activities should use the appropriate factor sun cream and apply it frequently to help prevent sunburn. This is a life skill that children should learn.





In order to prevent heat stroke individuals should wear a hat and take regular breaks in shaded areas.

High winds:

During periods of high winds, working at height outside should be prohibited, to eliminate the potential risk of falls from height.

Wherever possible, any lightweight external items including bins should be secured down to help minimise the occurrence of flying debris that may result in an injury.

Floods/Heavy rainfall:

The potential for slips increases as water can be carried into buildings on shoes. To minimise the risk follow the appropriate control measures identified in the model Risk Assessment for severe weather.

Part C – Legislation and Useful Links

1. Legislation

- Regulation 12 of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 requires employers to ensure that the “surface of every traffic route in the workplace” is suitable for the purpose for which it is used and to ensure so far as is reasonably practicable that surfaces are not slippery and do not have any substance(s) on them that may expose employees to an increased risk of slipping.
- The Health and Safety At Work Act 1974 and the Occupiers Liability Act 1957 & 1984 place a responsibility on the employer, so far as is reasonably practicable, to ensure that means of access and egress from premises are maintained in a condition that is safe and without risk to either employees or any other persons that may be affected.
- Other regulations that apply are
 - Personal Protective Equipment Regulations 2002
 - Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992 (as amended)
 - Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992 (as amended)





*School Lane Campus
Severe Weather Guidance
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