



Winter Maintenance Policy for Neston Market Square and Town Hall

Scope

The Council is responsible for the Market Square and is the most likely area where a weather related slip, trips or falls will occur. The Council has a responsibility to provide safe access and egress at all times. To ensure that the main access/egress routes are cleared of snow/ice; and put warning signs up and/or cordon off other areas if they are dangerous/untreated. Bearing in mind that individuals also have a responsibility to take care of themselves in icy conditions.

Policy

1. That ingress and egress to the Market Square will be cleared and gritted when required during the MEO working hours, or that of employed agency staff.
2. That grit will be made available to all stall holders via the bin to clear their own footways and pitches.
3. That the Market and Estate Officer with assistance of agency staff when available be responsible for all visitors to the market square by;
 - a. gritting areas to provide safe access and egress routes to and from the market square and the town hall;
 - b. displaying signage or cordoning off identified risk areas;
 - c. providing grit to the stall holders, and
 - d. adhering to the approved winter maintenance risk assessment

HSE Guidelines for Icy conditions and winter weather

Slip and trip accidents increase during the Autumn and Winter season for a number of reasons: there is less daylight, leaves fall onto paths and become wet and slippery and cold weather spells cause ice and snow to build up on paths. There are effective actions that you can take to reduce the risk of a slip or trip. Regardless of the size of your site, always ensure that regularly used walkways are promptly tackled.

Ice, frost and snow

- To reduce the risk of slips on ice, frost or snow, you need to assess the risk and put in a system to manage it.
- Identify the outdoor areas used by pedestrians most likely to be affected by ice, for example: - building entrances, car parks, pedestrian walkways, shortcuts, sloped areas and areas constantly in the shade or wet.
- Monitor the temperature, as prevention is key.
- You need to take action whenever freezing temperatures are forecast. Keep up to date by visiting a weather service site such as the [Met Office](#) or the [Highways England](#).
- There are also smart signs on the market, available to buy at low cost, which display warning messages at 50 and below.
- Put a procedure in place to prevent an icy surface forming and/or keep pedestrians off the slippery surface;
 - Use grit (see separate article below for more detail) or similar, on areas prone to be slippery in frosty, icy conditions;
 - Divert pedestrians to less slippery walkways and barrier off existing ones.
- If warning cones are used, remember to remove them once the hazard has passed or they will eventually be ignored.

Gritting

The most common method used to de-ice floors is gritting as it is relatively cheap, quick to apply and easy to spread. Rock salt (plain and treated) is the most commonly used 'grit'. It is the substance used on public roads by the highways authority.

Salt can stop ice forming and cause existing ice or snow to melt. It is most effective when it is ground down, but this will take far longer on pedestrian areas than on roads.

Gritting should be carried out when frost, ice or snow is forecast or when walkways are likely to be damp or wet and the floor temperatures are at, or below freezing. The best times are early in evening before the frost settles and/or early in the morning before employees arrive. Salt doesn't work instantly; it needs sufficient time to dissolve into the moisture on the floor.

If you grit when it is raining heavily the salt will be washed away, causing a problem if the rain then turns to snow. Compacted snow, which turns to ice, is difficult to treat effectively with grit. Be aware that 'dawn frost' can occur on dry surfaces, when early morning dew forms and freezes on impact with the cold surface. It can be difficult to predict when or where this condition will occur.