

Hampshire preparing for cold snap

With a forecast of heavy rain turning to snow, followed by a deep freeze overnight on Thursday (12 January) into the weekend, Hampshire County Council is getting ready to deploy its winter teams to keep the county moving.

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Winter crews are on standby 24/7 to respond to weather conditions. Highways teams constantly monitor road and air temperatures and localised weather forecasts to ensure the winter salting fleet treats the road network at the right time, whatever time of day or night.

Councillor Rob Humby, Executive Member for Environment and Transport at Hampshire County Council said: “The weather coming towards the South East is certainly going to be a challenge. Heavy rain, turning to sleet and then to snow at rush hour, followed by a high risk of ice for the next few days means that timing of salting runs is crucial.

“Preparations underway today, include putting out salt wicks (porous bags filled with salt) at locations where water is likely to run onto the roads from surrounding land. This means that as the water runs through the wicks, it will pick up the salt, which then drips onto the road surface, preventing

as the water runs through them, it mixes with the salt which then helps prevent ice forming on the road surface.

“We have a good stock of salt in our barns right across Hampshire and teams will be out making sure routes are salted in advance of freezing conditions. It looks like we’ll be running salting routes continuously from tomorrow and, because of the wet conditions with the forecast for snow, our salting lorries will be spreading the salt very densely. This means they will need to restock during their runs and it will therefore take around four hours to complete each route. If we do see the 5cm of snow that forecasters are predicting, we will also be deploying snow ploughs. As well as our own winter fleet, we have around 100 farmers ready with snow ploughs, who help keep roads clear for traffic.

“I would ask people to take particular care if they are out and about and urge people to drive according to the conditions at all times, even on the roads that have been salted, and to be patient around the salting lorries. People will need to plan their journeys and may need to think about adapting their travelling times. Footways are also likely to be icy, and everyone can help in their neighbourhoods by using the salt bins. Spreading a small amount of salt from the community salt bins on pavements or smaller access roads not covered by the highways crews will make a big impact on ice and frozen snow.”

Salting lorries across Hampshire treat the roads on a priority basis: priority one routes carry the majority of traffic of Hampshire and include A roads, some B roads, major bus routes, roads to emergency services, large schools and public transport areas. These roads carry around 85% of the traffic in Hampshire. In addition to these routes, winter crews will be treating extra ‘Community routes’ overnight to help with access to community facilities such as doctors’ surgeries and smaller schools on Friday morning.

Residents, particularly those in rural areas are also being asked to look out for vulnerable neighbours during the cold weather.

Taking extra care during cold weather is important for everyone, but particularly important for people who are more vulnerable to suffering ill health due to the cold, such as babies and very young children (under 5 years), older people (75+ years), people with pre-existing medical conditions.

Councillor Patricia Stallard, Hampshire County Council’s Executive Member for Health and Public Health, added: “The cold can kill, and while being able to keep warm is important for everyone, it is particularly vital for older people, the very young and those with long term medical conditions. I would encourage people to look out for any vulnerable neighbours, particularly in rural areas, to ensure they are able to stay warm, have warm food and drinks and have a clear access to and from their homes to help prevent them falling.”

If anyone is worried about an elderly neighbour or relative they should call Hampshire County Council's Adult's Health and Care team on 0300 555 1386, during the week in working hours, or call 0300 555 1373 out of hours and on weekends and Bank Holidays.

Top tips from Public Health on staying warm and well during the cold snap include:

- Keep Warm - heat your home to at least 18 degrees C (65F), if you can. If you can't heat all the rooms you use, heat the living room during the day, and your bedroom just before you go to bed
- Eat well - food gives you energy, which helps to keep you warm so try to have regular hot meals and hot drinks throughout the day
- Keep an eye on elderly or frail relatives, friends and neighbours

[Further information on severe weather and emergency contacts](http://www3.hants.gov.uk/emergency/)

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[Find out more tips and hints on safe winter driving at RoSPA \(http://www.rosipa.com/road-safety/advice/drivers/\)](http://www.rosipa.com/road-safety/advice/drivers/)

[Find out more about Hampshire's priority salting routes and where to find your nearest community salt bin](https://www.hants.gov.uk/transport/roadmaintenance/severeweather/salting)

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