

## Winter Service

### Q1) When does the gritting season start and finish?

Our winter maintenance arrangements are operational from late October until 31 March when our teams are on call 24/7 to precautionary salt routes and commence snow clearance if required. We will lengthen the gritting season if required.

### Q2) Which routes do you salt?

In South Gloucestershire we operate a two-tier salting system on our primary and secondary network. This hierarchy reflects the relative importance of the routes taking into account traffic volumes, links to schools, hospitals, shopping areas, villages and major business areas.

**Primary network:** These routes represent approximately 30% of our network. We will salt these roads on a precautionary basis when the road surface temperature is forecast to drop below zero. The primary network is split into nine main routes.

**Secondary network:** These routes represent 6% of our network. We will treat these routes if snow is predicted. The secondary network is split into four main routes. In severe snowfall conditions, it may not be possible for us to clear all routes so we will prioritise treatment on the strategic road network. This includes treating the A4174, A420, A46 and the A38 first and then work to clear other main routes before reaching our full priority network. You can view all our primary and secondary gritting routes on our website <http://www.southglos.gov.uk/find/gritting-routes-bins/>

### Q3) Do you salt pavements?

Yes, we treat footpaths and pavements. Most of the areas we cover have to be salted manually. Similarly to our roads, we operate a priority system for footpaths treating the busiest areas first. Areas covered are: Broad Street, High Street Chipping Sodbury, High Street Thornbury Badminton Road Downend Regent Street Kingswood Broad Street, High Street Staple Hill High Street Hanham Bristol-Bath railway path (Mangotsfield to Bristol boundary), new road shared used path to Abbeywood Roundabout along the ring road to Shortwood and linking to the railway path at Mangotsfield station.

### Q4) Do you salt cycle paths?

Yes, we salt sections of our busiest cycle routes. We try to treat these routes before ice forms using a small spreader mounted onto a tractor. You can view our salt routes for cycle paths on our website <http://www.southglos.gov.uk/documents/Cycleway-gritting-route.pdf> or on the map below.

**Q5) Do you have salt bins located in the community and do you top them up?**

We have 814 salt bins located at key points across South Gloucestershire. These are filled at the beginning of the winter maintenance season and are topped up as necessary during the winter. The bins are for use by members of the public to manually salt roads and pavements as required. This salt is for use on the public highway, please do not use it for the purpose of treating private property. You can view a map of where our salt bins are located <http://www.southglos.gov.uk/find/gritting-routes-bins/>

**Q6) Do you salt the motorway network?**

Motorways and trunk roads are the responsibility of Highways England. This includes the M4/M5/M32 and the A46 south of the M4 Junction 18.

**Q7) How many gritters do you have?**

Our winter maintenance fleet includes 12 gritters all of which can be fitted with snow ploughs if required. All our gritters have speed regulators when spreading which means they cannot go above 30mph. This allows the correct rate of spread for the salt. The vehicles are top of the range and are thoroughly cleaned after every salt run throughout the winter season to ensure they remain in prime condition.



**Q8) Where is the salt stored?**

We store approximately 5,000 tonnes of salt in our specialist barn at our depot in Broad Lane, Yate. We have additional deliveries planned over the winter if required to ensure that our salt stocks remain sufficient to carry out the service.

**Q9) How is it loaded and spread on the roads?**

The salt is loaded onto the gritters using a special conveyor at our salt barn. Each vehicle can carry between 9 and 12 tonnes of salt. The salt is then distributed through 'low throw'

spinners which keeps it on a low trajectory, optimises spread and ensures salt bounce is kept to a minimum. Different rates of spread will be needed in different weather conditions.

**Q10) How many staff are trained to drive the gritters?**

We have 40 officers trained to drive our fleet of gritters. During the winter, we operate a 3-shift system so one team is always 'on call' and we can sustain the service over a prolonged period of adverse weather.

**Q11) How are the decisions made to salt the roads or not?**

Senior offices make informed decisions based on detailed weather forecasts on a daily basis throughout the winter. We have a forecast for the next 24 hours in detail and for the subsequent four days. We also assess temperature profiles and the relative risk of ice or snow in specific areas of South Gloucestershire.

**Q12) Is it true that once salt has been spread on a road any ice will melt?**

No this is not correct. Spreading salt on the road is only the start of the de-icing process. Movement of salt around the road by traffic is essential to complete the process. When traffic levels are low, roads can remain icy for some time. Vehicles will help the process more than pedestrian and cycle traffic.

**Q13) Should you put salt directly on top of snow?**

The most effective way to deal with snow is to remove it from the road or pavement first before treating the area with salt. The salt will help to melt the snow but it takes a long time, particularly without any vehicle movements to help speed up the process. Salt is effective at minus 9 degrees and above but is less effective the colder temperatures drop towards minus 9 degrees. As part of the melting process requires drawing heat from the surroundings, it is best to remove as much deep snow before application as possible. If you are considering spreading salt on footways it is much more effective if you shovel or brush away the snow first and then apply the salt.

**Q14) Do you offer any advice for travel during winter weather?**

We advise everyone to take extra care when driving in cold weather.

1. Do not drive if snow and ice are forecast unless absolutely essential
2. Check weather forecasts for all of your journey before you set off
3. Remove all snow and ice from all your windows before driving
4. Be prepared – take a de-icer and ice scraper, a shovel, torch and First Aid kit as well as warm clothing and a blanket, warm drink and emergency food in case of a breakdown or delays
5. Follow the Highway Code advice on driving in snow and ice  
<https://www.highwaycodeuk.co.uk/icy-and-snowy-weather.html>
6. Keep up to date with local forecasts and road conditions, when it is safe to do so, on Twitter @sglosCouncil or Facebook @sglosstreetcare

**Q15) How can I keep up to date with forecasts and road closures?**

We provide updates on local forecasts and road conditions via Twitter @sglosCouncil or search #SouthGlosGritting. #GritterTwitter is also used but this can include posts from councils. Our dedicated StreetCare Facebook page [www.facebook.com/sglosstreetcare](http://www.facebook.com/sglosstreetcare) will also feature gritting information this winter. Please only check social media when it is safe to do so. Contact: [www.facebook.com/sglosstreetcare](http://www.facebook.com/sglosstreetcare) [www.southglos.gov.uk/gritting](http://www.southglos.gov.uk/gritting) other.

**Q16) Where can I find out about school closures in the event of snow this winter?**

You can view the latest information on school closures during bad weather on our website <http://www.southglos.gov.uk/education-and-learning/schools-and-education/schoolclosures/>

[www.facebook.com/sglosstreetcare](http://www.facebook.com/sglosstreetcare)

[www.southglos.gov.uk/gritting](http://www.southglos.gov.uk/gritting)