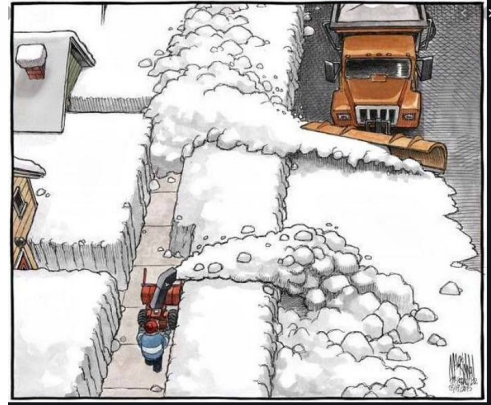


## Preparing for Winter — Issue 9 November 2019

### Slips, Trips and Fall Accidents in Icy/Snow Conditions — General Guidance



Work accidents, including slip and trip accidents, increase during Autumn and Winter for a number of reasons. In particular, there is less daylight, leaves fall onto paths and become wet and slippery and periods of cold weather can cause a build up of ice and snow on paths and regularly used walkways, and if untreated, can result in injury as a result of slips, trips and falls.

Health and Safety Executive (HSE) Guidance in relation to the above suggests that *“Arrangements should be made to minimise risks from snow and ice. This may involve gritting, snow clearing and closure of some routes, particularly outside stairs”*

In accordance with the Council’s Health and Safety Policy, managers have a duty to assess all their health and safety risks, including the risks of slips, trips and falls due to adverse weather conditions. Managers are required to ensure that all reasonably practicable measures are put in place to reduce or eliminate risks within their area of control. **This duty may include “out of hours” arrangements and for premises which require 24 hour staff cover, seven days a week.**

The following steps should be followed to assist managers in the risk assessment process:

1. Identify the outdoor areas used by staff, visitors, clients, service users, pupils, members of the public etc. 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.
2. Monitor the temperature, as prevention is paramount. Action should be taken whenever snow and/or freezing temperatures are forecasted.
3. Keep up to date by visiting a weather service website. The following are recommended: <https://www.xcweather.co.uk/> and <https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/>
4. Sign up to Floodline from SEPA as this will give you updates on Flood Alerts and Flood Warnings including the Barriers. <https://floodline.sepa.org.uk/floodupdates/>
5. Listen out for Police Scotland Travel Warnings in Local and National Media
6. Ensure a procedure is put in place to prevent an icy surface from forming and/or keep pedestrians off the slippery surface. Procedures could include:
  - Use of grit or salt on areas prone to be slippery in frosty, icy conditions;
  - Covering over walkways;
  - Diverting pedestrians to less slippery walkways and barrier off existing ones. If cones/signs etc. are being used, remember to remove once the hazard has passed or they will eventually be ignored.
7. Where reasonably practicable to do so, every effort should be made to remove fallen snow and melted slush from paths and walkways leading to and from main entrances to work premises. This applies particularly to premises where janitor/care taker etc. staff are employed and should be undertaken within their normal working hours.
8. **Shoe crampons are now widely available from industrial suppliers. These should be considered by managers for their staff who visit service users homes and regularly walk on untreated pathways.**

# Adverse Weather — Employee Responsibility

Employees have responsibility as individuals to consider their personal safety and whether their journey to work is safe. Consequently, they are not expected to, and should not put themselves and others at risk.

If any member of staff is unable to attend work because of adverse weather they must inform their manager at an early stage and as soon as they reasonably can. In these circumstances, the employee will have the option of either to take annual leave; be given the option to make up the time lost unless operationally impossible; or take unpaid leave. If the member of staff is participating in the flexi-scheme they have the option to make up the time using time credits.

In certain exceptional circumstances it may be that some Council facilities will be closed to staff due to adverse weather and therefore staff may be asked to report to an alternative work location or be asked not to travel to work that day. The Interim Chief Executive (and in his absence his deputising Executive Director) will take such decisions based on advice from the Executive Director of Development and Infrastructure and/or Police Scotland depending on the nature of the weather conditions. Similarly, work locations may be closed and staff sent home part way through a working day due to adverse weather locations, with the Interim Chief Executive taking the decision as set out above. It is the responsibility of each Service to communicate this to staff. In both these circumstances, staff will be paid and will not be required to take leave or make up any lost working time.

## What3words App

Police have urged everyone to download a smartphone app they say has already saved several lives. What is it and how does it work?

Kicked. Converged. Soccer.

These three randomly chosen words saved Jess Tinsley and her friends after they got lost in a forest on a dark, wet night. They had planned a five-mile circular stroll through Hamsterley Forest, in County Durham, on Sunday evening, but after three hours they were hopelessly lost.

At 22:30 BST they found a spot with phone signal and dialled 999.

"One of the first things the call-handler told us to do was download the what3words app," Ms Tinsley said. "I had never heard of it."

Within a minute of its download, the police said they knew where the group was and the soaked and freezing walkers were swiftly found by the Teesdale and Weardale Search and Mountain Rescue Team.

What3words essentially points to a very specific location. The Safety and Resilience Office in School Place can be found at [///cities.thin.interviewer](#).

Its developers divided the world into 57 trillion squares, each measuring 3m by 3m (10ft by 10ft) and each having a unique, randomly assigned three-word address.

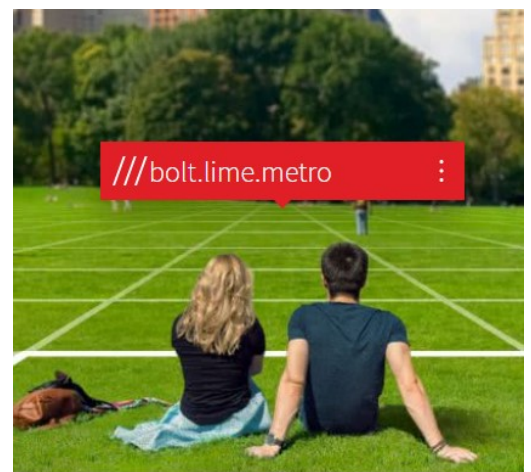
For example, the door of 10 Downing Street is [slurs.this.shark](#), while the area across the road where the press congregate is [stage.pushy.nuns](#).

Humberside Police also used the system to find a group of foreign nationals, including a pregnant woman in labour, who were trapped inside a shipping container at a port.

"The port had over 20,000 containers and we knew that we needed to get to them quickly," said the force's control room supervisor Paul Redshaw.

The group were told to download the app and they were soon found.

<https://what3words.com/>



# Safety issues regarding portable heaters

Most offices within School Place have portable heaters. When in use, portable heaters should be located away from all combustible materials, and always switched off before leaving your office.

Please do not decorate your portable heater with combustible materials.

Staff should **not bring** in heaters from home for office use.

If, at any time, your office is cold contact Customer Services initially on extension 2902 and they will log this on the property database for action.

Portable halogen heaters are considered an ignition source and should not be used in an office environment.

## A Merry and Safe Christmas

### SOME BASIC SAFETY TIPS:

- Suspend decorations away from hot surfaces (such as light fittings, heaters, etc.);
- Do not cover over light fittings with flammable decorations (crepe paper, etc.);
- Keep Christmas cards and desk decorations etc. away from hot surfaces and electrical sources;
- Preferably, use a step ladder or kick stool for access to suspend decorations. Swivel chairs are unsafe. Do not stand on desks etc. If you are unsure of how to use a step ladder safely, ask for advice;
- Do not obscure fire exit signs, fire alarm call points, fire extinguishers, sprinkler heads and detector heads;
- Select safe areas for displays and Christmas trees. Do not block escape routes, stairways and exit doorways;
- **Ensure Christmas lighting, including tree lights, displays etc. are switched off before you leave the office;**
- Multi plug adaptors should not be used; and
- Do not overload power sockets and only use multi-gang extension leads that have been tested by the Council's contractor. These will be labelled, displaying when tested and when next test is due. However, the very nature of Christmas decorations is that they are packed away for a year and forgotten about until next required. There is a chance that your Christmas lighting may not have been found for inspection. This does not mean that the equipment is unsafe for use, but staff must be extremely careful and check the items thoroughly before use and if faults are found then the item must not be used until repaired by an approved and competent electrician. New bought items should also be thoroughly checked before use.

## Road Safety



It's important that young folk make sure they check the road themselves before crossing, and not follow signals from drivers. The risk of waving pedestrians across the road is that you, as the driver, may not be able to see both directions clearly — especially from behind a school bus.

There's also the added danger that gesturing can distract the pedestrian—one moment of distraction and hesitation on the road can lead to a serious accident.



# Winter Road Safety

Remember that stopping distances double in wet weather; and on ice or snow they can be ten times longer than normal. So, as winter approaches, always drive appropriately for the conditions.

Here are some tips for driving during the winter months:

- Check your tyre pressure and lights before setting off;
- Always carry an emergency kit of scraper, de-icer, torch, first aid kit, jump leads and shovel;
- In fog, use dipped headlights unless visibility is less than 100 metres, when fog lights should be used.
- Ensure your tyres have good tread for the winter months.
- Employees should ensure that they wear sensible shoes/boots when you are travelling to work and crossing car parks to the workplace;
- All staff should have already read the Driving at Work Handbook but in case you haven't or have forgotten what it says a link to it is [here](#). All staff should follow the guidance contained within in this to reduce the likelihood of vehicle related accidents.

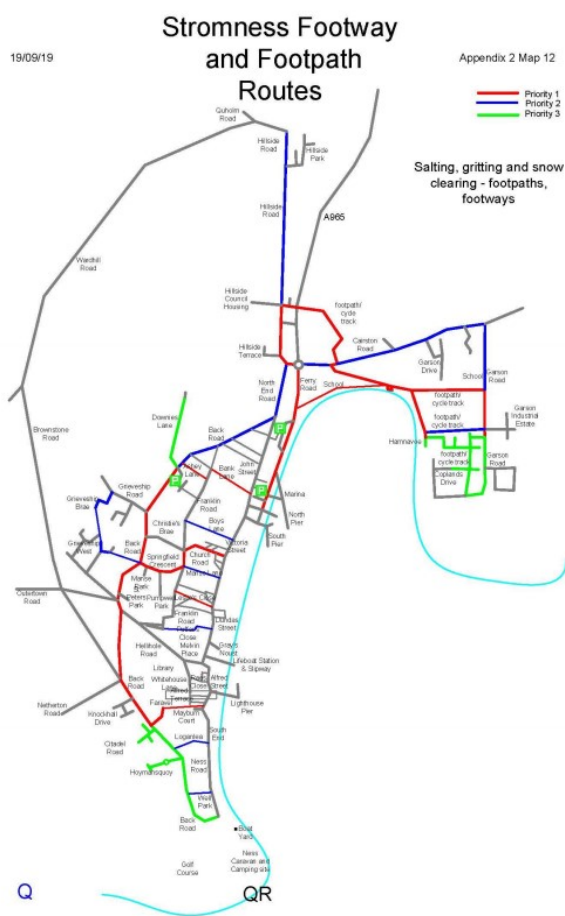
## Icy/Snow Conditions— Pathway Clearance

Orkney Islands Council, through Development and Infrastructure aims to provide a winter service which allows the safe movement of vehicles and pedestrians on roads and keeps delays caused by adverse winter weather to a minimum.

D and I have prepared a footway hierarchy for precautionary gritting, post gritting and snow clearing and a Winter Service Plan which will be reviewed annually by the Council following the confirmation of the Council's Revenue estimates and Capital Programme. A copy of the Winter Service Plan for 2019/20 can be found [here](#).

Footways and footpaths in Kirkwall and Stromness have been prioritised and will be cleared according to their priority. Gaps will be formed in piled snow at roadsides at bus-stops and at crossing points.

As you'll see housing development roads are not included in those that are treated, however there are salt-grit bins in these areas for self-help.



# Preparedness

With the advent of winter, undoubtedly we will experience issues which will affect our daily lives. This may include travel disruption or weather which directly impacts on our property. To assist you in preparing for this, there are a number of websites which you can access or subscribe to provide you the latest up to date information. These include:

<https://www.readyscotland.org/> which provides information on weather, flooding, loss of utilities and other useful information;

<http://www.floodlinescotland.org.uk/> which can alert you to flooding within your area;

Floodline 03459881188;

<https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/public/weather/warnings>

Met office national severe weather warning service together with their METOFFICE APP available on Android and Apple;

Scottish Southern Electricity Network offer an App entitled POWERTRACK which maps known faults and provides updates to current ones. This together with the new 105 number for alerting them to power disruptions, should keep you informed of any power cut.

If you are travelling away from Orkney then please visit the website of your travel provider who will keep their site updated with regular travel information and any disruption. Please consider weather conditions en route and after you have arrived at your destination.

If you are travelling across the Barriers then please access Orkney Islands Council website or Twitter feed @OIC\_ROADS; Radio Orkney Facebook site, or Twitter feed @BBCOrkney; or Police Scotland Orkney's twitter feed @OrkneyPolice who will keep live information on road conditions.

At Home—Keep handy:

- A (wind-up) torch;
- A (wind-up) radio;
- Spare batteries;
- Keep mobile phones, laptops or tablet devices fully charged;
- 3 days' supply of water and ready-to-eat food (that won't go off);
- Essential medicines, first aid kit and toiletries;
- Spare keys for your car and home;
- Copies of important documents like insurance policies and birth certificates;
- Baby and pet supplies, if needed; and
- Shovel and salt for ice and snow.

## EMERGENCY NUMBERS

**Police Scotland 101**

**NHS 111**

**Scottish Water 0845 600 8855**

**Scottish Southern Electricity Network  
105**

**FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT**

<https://www.readyscotland.org/>

**Ice Room / Hatston Emergency Number:  
876338**

## THINKING ABOUT YOUR LOCAL COMMUNITY

Some may struggle when the weather is bad so think about family or neighbours who may need help:

- Offer to lend a hand with grocery shopping or other essential tasks;
- Clear snow or ice from pathways;
- Get together with other people in the community who want to help out;
- Find out how communities can work together to prepare for severe weather; and
- Volunteer to help others during winter via [volunteerscotland.org.uk](http://volunteerscotland.org.uk)

Download the [Ready Scotland](#) app to your phone for essential tools and advice on how to get ready.

***The Safety Committee and Health and Safety Forum members wish you all a  
Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.***

***Keep warm and safe this Christmas.***