

East Sussex Highways Winter Service Toolkit

This pack is designed to provide all the information you'll need to answer queries from residents, signpost to the relevant pages on the East Sussex Highways website and help inform local communities on how to stay safe during when travelling this winter.

In this pack, you'll find:

- An overview of our winter service, including when it is and what's involved
- Useful resources you can share, including posters, website articles and social media content
- Useful links to information pages on the East Sussex Highways website

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Ensuring our roads remain safe and accessible during the winter months is a key priority for local authorities. Every winter, we work to help keep the county moving safely during periods of frost, ice and snow.

We recognise that town and parish councils play an important role in helping residents stay informed during adverse weather. This stakeholder pack provides useful information on the East Sussex Highways winter service, Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) to help you respond to enquiries and resources you can use in your newsletters, website and social media channels to increase awareness.

Winter service overview

From **1 October to 30 April**, we monitor weather conditions around the clock and respond when treatment is needed. Recent years have shown that swift and effective responses are crucial – our gritting team is always on standby in colder weather, and winter service plans are activated at the first sign of falling temperatures.

What we do to keep the roads safe in winter

To prepare for the winter season, we inspect and re-fill all Highway owned grit bins in the autumn, and stock approximately 10,000 tonnes of rock salt across our five depots located in Ringmer, Heathfield, Polegate, Cripps Corner and Maresfield.

When weather turns colder, gritting decisions are based on forecasts from MetDesk and road surface temperatures. Our Operational Control Hub (OCH) monitors six weather stations across the county for temperature, weather conditions and traffic monitoring.

Gritting priorities

We treat more than 750 miles of highway on a typical frosty night on what we call our Primary gritting routes. This includes all A and B roads and some C roads.

It is not possible to treat every road during every cold weather event. Priority is given to routes carrying the highest traffic volumes and those providing access between communities, public transport routes and key services. This helps us keep the county moving safely and ensures resources are used where

they will have the greatest benefit. During severe or prolonged weather events, additional routes may also be treated where resources allow.

In East Sussex, there are five gritting domains:

- High Weald West & East – Rural, hilly, and wooded. These domains tackle steep gradients and frosty lanes connecting villages and market towns.
- Central – The heart of the network – keeping everyone connected.
- South East Coastal – Think Eastbourne, Bexhill and Hastings. Flatter roads but watch out for freezing fog and sea spray!
- South Downs – Chalk hills and open ridges. Scenic routes need extra care against frost and icy winds blowing from the Channel.

Each domain faces its own unique challenge – from icy rural lanes to coastal chill. Understanding these areas helps us plan and prioritise gritting effectively, ensuring safer journeys for residents, businesses, and emergency services.

Information on our gritting routes can be found on our website: Gritting routes | What we do - Winter service | live.eastsussexhighways.com





Website article

Here's a ready to use blog post for your website you can copy and paste:

East Sussex Highways are winter ready

Winter can bring frost, ice and snow, which can make travelling more difficult for everyone. That's why East Sussex Highways starts preparing long before the colder weather arrives, by filling all Highway-owned grit bins between late Summer and early Autumn. Vehicles and routes are checked, as well as salt stores being replenished ahead of Winter.

With the winter service period running from 1 October to 30 April each year, teams monitor the weather daily and are ready to respond whenever conditions mean roads may need treating.

When cold weather is forecast, decisions about gritting are based on detailed weather forecasts, road surface temperatures and local conditions across the county. This helps ensure the right roads are treated at the right time.

As it's not possible to grit every road, priority is given to routes that carry the most traffic and connect communities, businesses, public transport and essential services. During particularly severe weather, additional routes may also be treated, where resources allow.

Behind the scenes, East Sussex Highways maintains a fleet of 21 gritters, with drivers remaining on standby throughout the season to respond quickly when freezing conditions are expected.

How you can prepare

A little preparation can make a big difference when winter weather arrives. Road users are are encouraged to:

- Check the weather forecast before setting off
- Allow extra time for journeys
- Make sure vehicles are ready for winter conditions
- Drive according to the weather and road conditions

Stay up to date

You can find the latest information on gritting routes, grit bin locations, winter safety advice and how to report a highway issue on the East Sussex Highways website: https://live.eastsussexhighways.com/services/services-winter-service

Gritting decisions and winter weather updates are also shared throughout the season on East Sussex Highways' social media channels.

By planning ahead and staying informed, we can all play a part in helping East Sussex keep moving safely throughout the winter months.

Ready to share social media posts

A selection of useful social media posts to help residents find information and understand the East Sussex Highways winter service. Please tag us when posting to your channels and use the hashtags provided.

Winter service overview

From 1 October to 30 April, East Sussex Highways monitor weather conditions around the clock and are ready to respond to frost, ice and snow when needed.

To help keep the county moving safely, priority routes are treated when forecasts indicate icy conditions.

Find out more about winter services, gritting routes and winter travel advice on the East Sussex Highways website: https://live.eastsussexhighways.com/services/services-winter-service

#WinterReady #EastSussexHighways

Report a problem

⚠️ Need to report a problem on the road?

Visit www.eastsussexhighways.com/report-problem to report a broken or empty grit bin, pothole or trip hazard. If you haven't already, you can create an account to follow your report and get updates following the inspection.

#EastSussexHighways #WinterReady #HighwayMaintenance

Winter driving advice

🚗 Travelling this winter?

Before setting off:

✔ Check the weather forecast
✔ Allow extra time for your journey

✔ Make sure your vehicle is #WinterReady

✔ Keep essentials such as a charged phone, warm clothing and de-icer with you

Even on treated roads, conditions can change quickly during severe weather. For more information, visit: https://live.eastsussexhighways.com/services/services-winter-service/8

#WinterReady #EastSussexHighways #DriveSafe

Grit bin awareness

Did you know?

Highway-owned grit bins are inspected and refilled before winter to help communities prepare for icy weather.

Residents can use grit from these bins on public roads and footways where needed. Please use it carefully and only for its intended purpose.

Find grit bin locations and winter service information, visit: https://live.eastsussexhighways.com/services/services-winter-service

#WinterReady #CommunitySupport #EastSussexHighways

Severe weather updates

🌧️ Want to stay up to date with the latest weather updates? 🌨️

Weather warnings and forecasts are available at www.metoffice.gov.uk, with gritting updates and road closure information available at www.eastsussexhighways.com.

#EastSussexHighways #WinterReady #WeatherUpdates

How gritting decisions are made

🌡️ **Ever wondered how gritting decisions are made?**

East Sussex Highways uses specialist weather forecasts, road surface temperature data and local monitoring information to decide if treatment is required.

Decisions are made daily throughout the winter season to help keep key routes safe and accessible. For more information, visit: https://live.eastsussexhighways.com/services/services-winter-service/6

#WinterReady #EastSussexHighways #Gritting

Alternative – How gritting decisions are made

🚸 East Sussex Highways operate six strategically placed weather stations across the county to support winter gritting decisions.

Based in Rye, Lewes, Willingdon, Golden Cross, Wych Cross, and Mark Cross, these stations provide real-time data on weather conditions and traffic movements. Combined with expert forecasts from MetDesk, this information helps make timely, evidence-based decisions about when and where to grit.

For more information, visit: https://live.eastsussexhighways.com/services/services-winter-service/6

#WinterReady #EastSussexHighways #Gritting

Gritting routes

🚜 **Why isn't every road gritted?**

During cold weather, East Sussex Highways focuses on priority routes, including major roads, key bus routes and roads providing access to essential services.

While it's not possible to treat every road, priority gritting helps keep the county moving during winter conditions.

Please remember that even gritted roads can still be slippery, so always travel to the conditions.

For more information, visit: https://live.eastsussexhighways.com/services/services-winter-service/4

#WinterReady #EastSussexHighways #Gritting



Here are some of the most common questions we get asked:

When does the winter service operate?

The East Sussex Highways winter service operates from **1 October to 30 April** each year. During this period, weather forecasts and road conditions are monitored daily to determine whether treatment is required.

How does East Sussex Highways decide when to grit?

Decisions are based on specialist weather forecasts, road surface temperature data, moisture levels and local conditions. Forecasts are reviewed daily throughout the winter season to identify when frost, ice, snow or freezing rain may affect the road network.

Which roads are gritted?

East Sussex Highways prioritises roads that carry the highest traffic volumes and provide important connections between communities, public transport routes and key services. During severe or prolonged weather conditions, additional routes may also be treated.

Why isn't my road gritted?

It is not possible to treat every road during every cold weather event. Priority is given to the most heavily used routes to help keep the county moving safely and allow access to essential services.

How can residents find out if their road is on a gritting route?

You can view gritting routes and monitor winter service information on the East Sussex Highways website. Route maps are available online to help residents understand which roads are routinely treated.

Gritting routes | What we do - Winter service | live.eastsussexhighways.com

What happens during severe snow or prolonged freezing weather?

During severe weather, East Sussex Highways may activate additional treatment routes to focus resources on keeping key routes open. Community snow plough operators and contractors may also be called upon to assist.

How much salt is available for winter service?

East Sussex Highways maintains significant salt stocks and resources to support winter operations, with around 10,000 tonnes of rock salt available across five depots.

Where can residents find a grit bin?

Locations of highway-owned grit bins can be found using the East Sussex Highways online 'Gritting Route' map. Residents can also report grit bins that require attention here: Location of grit bin – live.eastsussexhighways.com

Can residents use grit from public grit bins?

Yes. Grit bins are provided to help communities manage localised icy conditions on public roads and footways, where it is safe to do so.

Why do roads sometimes look wet after they've been gritted?

Gritting prevents ice from forming by lowering the freezing point of water. A treated road may still appear wet even though salt has been applied and is actively working to reduce the risk of ice formation. Drivers are advised to drive to the conditions, even if a road has been treated.

Does gritting stop snow from settling?

Grit helps prevent ice from forming and can assist with snow clearance, but it does not prevent all snow from settling, particularly during heavy snowfall. Additional treatments and snow ploughing may be required.

How can residents stay informed during winter weather?

You can:

1. Check weather forecasts before travelling.
2. Follow East Sussex Highways on social media for gritting decisions and winter updates.
3. Visit the East Sussex Highways website for route maps, grit bin locations and winter advice.

What should drivers do before travelling in winter weather?

Drivers should ensure their vehicle is prepared for winter conditions, allow extra time for journeys and adjust their driving to suit the weather and road conditions. East Sussex Highways also encourages motorists to carry winter essentials when travelling during severe weather.

How can residents report a highway issue during winter?

Issues such as potholes, flooding, fallen trees and other highway concerns can be reported through the East Sussex Highways reporting service. Urgent emergencies should be reported by phone, on 0345 60 80 193. All other enquiries can be reported online here: Report a Problem – live.eastsussexhighways.com



Winter service webpages

Winter maintenance service | What we do - Winter service | live.eastsussexhighways.com

Gritting route and grit bin location map

Gritting routes | What we do - Winter service | live.eastsussexhighways.com

Report a problem

Report a Problem – live.eastsussexhighways.com

Winter safety advice

Winter road safety advice | What we do - Winter service | live.eastsussexhighways.com

East Sussex Highways social media channels

Facebook: www.facebook.com/EastSussexHighways

Instagram: www.instagram.com/eastsussexhighways

X: www.x.com/esccroads

LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com/company/east-sussex-highways