



Winter Service Policy and Operational Plan

2011 – 2012



Introduction

The purpose of this Winter Service Policy and Plan is to demonstrate that Midlothian Council has taken such steps as it considers reasonable to prevent snow and ice endangering the safe passage of pedestrians and vehicles over public roads, to fulfil its' Statutory responsibilities as defined in Section 34 of the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984.

Furthermore this plan takes into consideration the Recommendations set out in the Code of Practice (July 2005), 'Well Maintained Highways' (Code of Practice), Section 13 and the subsequent updated recommendations issued in June 2011. Given that the Code of Practice is only making recommendations, it should be noted that Midlothian Council may deviate in certain ways to meet local conditions.

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Winter Service and Weather Emergencies

Winter service is not deemed an emergency service as it deals with 'regular, frequent and reasonably predictable occurrences of low temperatures' ice and snow'.

Whilst the effects of climate change are likely to result in an increased frequency and intensity of severe weather events, these have been taken into account in winter service planning.

The Winter Service Plan is likely to have a relevance in emergency planning for dealing with extreme weather conditions, as such this plan should be read in conjunction with Midlothian Council's Severe Weather Plan.

Purpose, Objectives and Statutory Basis

Section 34 of the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984 states 'a road authority shall take such steps as it considers reasonable to prevent snow and ice endangering the safe passage of pedestrians and vehicles over public roads'.

The Purpose of this Winter Service Plan is to discharge those duties however it should be noted that section 13.1.9 of the Code of Practice states

'Given the scale of financial and other resources involved in delivering the winter service it is not reasonable either to:

Provide the service on all parts of the network

Ensure running surfaces are kept free of ice and snow at all times, even on treated parts of the network

This Winter Service Plan can contribute significantly to the core objectives set out in the code. The Winter Service Plan also contributes to the delivery of some corporate objectives of the Authority

Corporate Priority 1e:- 'Provide suitable infrastructure for efficient and effective delivery of services to meet the full range of community need.

Corporate Priority 3c:- 'Work with partners to protect vulnerable people'

Corporate Priority 5a; - 'Improve the level of achievement / attainment for children and adults in lifelong learning'



Corporate Priority 6b:- 'Put our customers first'

Corporate Priority 6e:- 'Ensure a sustainable strategy for the delivery of council services'

To comply with the requirements of the Roads Scotland Act

To comply with the recommendations as laid out in the Code of Practice

Winter Service Policy

Midlothian Council recognises it's duties under the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984, the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 and the recommendations made in the Code of Practice.

The purpose of this policy seeks to discharge those duties and provide transparent and consistent guidance for staff and stakeholders during winter or any other severe weather period within the Midlothian Council Area.

Midlothian Council has undertaken consultation with stakeholders to take account of the views of stakeholders.

Furthermore Midlothian Council has taken steps in the winter service operational plan to ensure the corporate objectives of the authority are supported by this Policy.

Policy Service Standards

1. Keep agreed priority route and main Bus routes free from snow and ice as far as reasonably practicable as a priority.
2. Clear agreed road and footway 'Access Routes' to all schools and education establishments within Midlothian during periods of snow.
3. Support facilities management staff within school grounds during periods of prolonged snow conditions, as required and as resources are available.
4. Support social / care centres in clearing pedestrian access routes in and around facilities.
5. Maintain waste collection services as far as possible, set up local collection points when and if conditions allow.



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6. Support NHS facilities with hand crews to clear footways and pedestrian access areas.
 7. Support local community groups by providing bulk bags of salt / grit at pre agreed locations during periods of prolonged snow conditions.

This Policy and plan is formally approved, adopted and published by the authority and the Policy and Plan is submitted annually for adoption.



Winter Service Operational Plan

This Winter Service Operational Plan has been developed to take account on the requirements of section 13.4 and Appendix H of the Code of Practice to provide a dynamic and interactive plan that can meet changing circumstances.

Midlothian Council has an agreed and defined route priority hierarchy to ensure that maximum use is made of the available resources as follows:

Carriageway Priorities

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|---------------------|---|
| 1 Priority Routes: | Important principal roads and bus routes – to hospitals, ambulance depots, fire stations and local danger spots (e.g. very steep hills) |
| 2 Secondary Routes: | Cross routes, connecting routes and accesses into industrial areas. |
| 3 Tertiary Routes: | Residential areas, other unclassified roads and culs-de-sac |

Footway Priorities

- | | |
|---------------------|--|
| 1 Priority Routes: | Agreed 'access routes' to schools, health clinics, and town centres. |
| 2 Secondary Routes: | Footways on hills and connecting footways |
| 3 Tertiary Routes: | Flat lying and residential areas |

These routes will be treated in accordance with the treatment matrix.

Midlothian Council's defined treatment route plans for carriageways and footways for pre-treatment and snow conditions are based upon the general maintenance hierarchy but adapted to take account of the factors identified in the Code of Practice and local conditions and priorities.

The Code of Practice recognises that during periods of severe weather it is reasonable that Midlothian Council may only treat a minimum network (priority routes only) to allow passage on these routes. Secondary and tertiary routes may not be treated until all Priority routes are clear.

Midlothian Council carriageway and footway treatment routes can be found on Midlothian Council's website



Network Hierarchy and Route Planning

Midlothian Council has allocated a network hierarchy rating to all roads within the area based on the Code of Practice. This hierarchy rating has been utilised along with the available resources to determine the route planning for treatment during winter to ensure as far as is reasonably practicable Midlothian Council discharges its duties under the Road (Scotland) Act 1984.

Decisions and Management Information

Midlothian Council takes full advantage of decision support systems and services from the 'Metoffice' and 'Vaisala' to enable timely, efficient and accurate decision making.

The decision making process and recording Management Information of Winter Service operations is carried out in accordance with the Winter Service Manual and Procedures document.

Midlothian Council continually monitors performance during service delivery and responds to changing conditions or network incidents by analysing the treatment reports and feedback from stakeholders to ascertain where any improvements can be made as part of the annual review process of this document.

Resources and Operational Issues

Midlothian Council has available resources from the in house Roads Operation service based at Fushiebridge depot. Roads Operations manage and provide the winter / weather service throughout the year.

Roads Operations have agreements with Land Services, Building Maintenance Services, Facilities Management and Waste Services to utilise available additional resources during periods of snowfall.

In addition to the above, through a framework contract, Roads Operations have a further 11 companies at their disposal during the winter to assist with winter duties on an as required basis.

A full list of the available resources is held by the Duty Officer. This also shows where all resources are deployed and to what end.

The Roads Operations and Asset Manager has undertaken consultation with colleagues in Education, Social Services, Travel Team, Leisure Services, Customer Services and local community groups to establish agreed service levels to deal with the many conflicting priorities of each service, matched to the available resources.



This co-ordination and collaboration Service Level agreement is held by the Roads Operations and Asset Manager.

Winter Service Training and Development

Midlothian Council ensures that all HGV personnel involved in the winter service plan, are trained and experienced to demonstrate competence in delivery of their duties. Other winter service staff will have or are being trained by the Roads Operations Supervisor based at Fushiebridge depot.

In general all Roads Operations staff are trained to SVQ level 2 as a minimum.

An annual evaluation and review of training requirements is undertaken by the Roads Operations Supervisor to ensure all staff have the appropriate vocational and health and safety training / qualifications. Any identified training will be completed prior to the start of the winter season. Some evidence based training and assessment can only take place during winter operations. A record of all training is held by the Roads Operations Supervisor at Fushiebridge Depot.

Midlothian Council carries out periodic exercises to test plans for responding to severe weather events, these exercises are usually carried out in early October, to ensure all equipment is operational and all staff are aware of their duties.

Plant, Vehicles, Materials and Resilience

Plant

8 number Mini tractors c/w snow scraper and gritter – Fushiebridge

2 number JCB 3CX shovels and 3 number JCB 2CX shovels – Fushiebridge

2 number Renault tractors c/w scraper and gritter – Stobhill

Other plant will be made available from framework contract partners.

Vehicles

4 number, 17t HGV gritters c/w snow scraper

4 number, 26t HGV gritters c/w snow scraper and 2 Hi Capacity 'V' ploughs

1 number, 7.5t gritter c/w snow scraper

4 number, 6t pick-up trucks, 1 with a gritter

1 number 4t pick-up truck



2 number, 4x4 pick-up trucks with gritter and snow scraper

All of the above are based at Fushiebridge Depot

1 number 3.5t pick-up truck with gritter based at Stobhill depot

All other pick-up's and vans based at Stobhill depot will be utilised along with the available framework contract partners vehicles listed.

Materials

Midlothian Council obtains salt supplies for de-icing through the Scotland Excel (SE) contract, using Cleveland Potash as the main supplier, with other suppliers available through the SE framework. Regular contact is maintained between the supplier and the Council to ensure that the supply is treated as a service rather than a simple commodity purchase.

In periods of extreme or prolonged conditions it may be necessary to obtain supplies from out-with the existing contracts and Midlothian Council will use this option as required and in collaboration with our Edinburgh, Lothian's and Borders Forum (ELBF) shared service partners.

Stocks of road salt and grit are controlled by the Roads Operations and Asset Manager. A minimum stock of 6500t of 10mm low moisture salt is held prior to November between Fushiebridge Salt dome and at Middleton Lime works. This stockholding will be used for the road and footway network only.

This stock of salt may be subject to routine reporting on use and current levels to the Scottish Government and may be sequestered to provide mutual aid to other authorities. As such it is prudent to instigate conservation measures during periods of prolonged snowfall or low temperatures (i.e. mixing salt with grit, using grit only on footways and grit bins).

There is a further stock of salt to be used in School grounds. This will also be managed by the Roads Operations and Asset Manager to monitor use.

A stock of 0/4mm grit will be available from a framework contract partner 'Leith's' at their Newtongrange plant and can be supplemented from their Edstone Quarry near Peebles should the need arise. Leith has agreed to have a minimum of 800t available at any time.

A supply of salt / grit mix from the main stock holding, for use by footway clearing crews is held at the following locations.



Leith's Newtongrange Plant – Framework Contract Partner

Crummock's Yard, Butlerfield Industrial Estate - Framework Contract Partner

Weesweep's Yard, Butlerfield Industrial Estate - Framework Contract Partner

R Darlings at Mayshade Garden Centre, Eskbank - Framework Contract Partner

Stobhill depot, Newtongrange

These stocks ensure that footway clearing crews are able to go direct to their designated routes direct from their place of work, thus speeding up operational response times.

In addition to salt and grit, there will be a stock of 4000 litres of a de-icing solution held. This solution is suitable for treatment down to minus 18 degrees Celsius and will be utilised using a vehicle mounted spray bar to treat know problem areas at these very low temperatures.

A weighbridge has been installed at Fushiebridge depot to ensure the accurate recording of salt stock and usage, to comply with Scottish Government reporting.



Resilience

Resilience of salt stock is measured by Society of Chief Officers for Transportation in Scotland (SCOTS) based on the treated network length and the available stock holding. The level of resilience in the past has been used to determine delivery priorities of top up salt supplies to Local Authorities and Trunk Road Operators.

Midlothian Council did not require any additional supplies during 2010 - 2011 and will again reduce this risk in 2011 – 2012 by an increase in pre season stock holding and the instigation of salt conservation measures. These measures proved very effective in maintaining a 24 hour service at all times during 2010 -2011.

Information and Publicity

Prior to the start of winter Midlothian Council will publish information regarding the winter service provision. A self help leaflet will also be available in public buildings to assist members of the public.

The Communications and Marketing Unit will advise the Emergency Management Team on both public and general stakeholder response to any incident and on the public messages to be broadcast across the communications channels at the Council's disposal. This role includes liaising closely with public communications leads at the Scottish Government and other category one responders as part of the public communications subgroup of the Strategic Co-ordinating Group.

If the incident is sufficiently serious and far-reaching, members of the Communications and Marketing Unit will be seconded to the lead agency, normally the Police, for an unspecified time as part of the mutual aid arrangements.

The communications channels include: the Council's Contact Centre, media relations, stakeholder relations in terms of voluntary organisations, Mid TV, www.midlothian.gov.uk, Facebook and Twitter.

The Communications and Marketing Unit will ensure regular and appropriate communications at least daily and more frequently depending on the incident and the Council's continuing response. Staff are available to be called out 24 -7.

In addition to the above the Service Level Agreement with the Midlothian Council Contact Centre may dictate that the centre remains open 24 hours during any severe weather period. This will be agreed between the Head of Customer Services and the Roads Operations and Asset Manager.



Post Snow Inspection and Maintenance

Once the snow has been removed from the road and footway network, the Roads Inspectors will inspect the network to ascertain defects in need of repair.

These inspections will be carried out generally in accordance with the Code of Practice and the Council's Inspection and Recording Procedures.

It should be noted that due to the potential volume of defects caused by the conditions, it may not be possible to adhere to the timescales for inspection and subsequent repairs of CAT 1 defects as laid out in the Code of Practice.

Midlothian Council will however, allocate additional resources at their disposal to the repair of identified defects to mitigate as far as is reasonably practicable any delays in repairing CAT 1 defects.

Midlothian Council will also check and replenish all public grit bins as soon as resources allow during and following the completion of snow clearance operations.

Furthermore all vehicles and plant will be cleaned, lubricated, checked / inspected and repaired as required following the completion of snow clearing operations

A debriefing session will be held at an appropriate time and place, involving representatives from all personnel and stakeholders to review the winter service operational plan.

Other Weather Emergencies – Climate Change

Midlothian Council recognises that Climate change and in particular the recent periods of prolonged cold weather have an impact on the ability to deliver services.

As such the operational plan can be implemented at any time of year to deliver a service during any period of severe weather, including floods and storms.

Contingency Planning

Contingency planning for severe weather or any other major event is covered by the Emergency Plan and / or the Severe Weather plan, which should be read in conjunction with this plan.

Mark Rankine

Roads Operations and Asset Manager

Sept 2011.