

Are you ready for winter – at home?

There are certain practical steps that you can take to protect your home from winter weather:

- ✓ Leave your heating on for at least an hour a day while you are away from home;
- ✓ In severe weather, or if severe weather is forecast, you should leave your heating on day and night at your usual temperature setting;
- ✓ Check that loft insulation is laid over, and under pipes in the loft;
- ✓ Make sure that you know where your stop tap is, and that it works so that you can turn off the water supply if needed;
- ✓ Consider asking a friend or relative to visit your home every day while you are away. This will mean that, if you do suffer a burst pipe, it will be detected as soon as possible. Make sure that they know where the stop tap is located;
- ✓ If high winds are forecast, make sure objects such as garden furniture or ladders are fully secured.

Energy saving tips:

Some of these energy-saving tips may seem obvious but they can make a big difference when it comes to reducing your fuel bill:

- ✓ Set your heating to come on just before you get up and switch off after you've gone to bed. If it's very cold, set your heating to come on earlier and turn off later rather than turning the thermostat up;
- ✓ If you can't heat all the rooms you use, heat the living room throughout the day and your bedroom just before you go to bed. Remember to close curtains and shut doors to keep heat in the rooms you use most;
- ✓ Insulating your home not only keeps you warm and healthy but will also help to keep your costs down.

Clearing snow and ice:

Being a good neighbour and clearing paths of ice and snow is the kind of practical step that most of us can take during cold weather. In fact, a helping hand with this can make all the difference for people who may be unable to clear their own paths, or who need to use local paths to access services.

It's much easier to clear fresh snow, so make a start before people squash it down if you can.

When clearing paths you should follow this advice:

- ✓ Do not use hot water. This will melt the snow, but may well replace it with black ice, increasing the risk of injury;
- ✓ Choose suitable clothing for the task, e.g. footwear that provides a good grip;





- ✓ Do not take unnecessary risks in the road. Traffic will find it difficult to stop quickly in icy conditions. When clearing snow and ice, wear visible clothing that helps traffic to see you;
- ✓ If shovelling snow, think about where you are going to put it, so that it does not block people's paths or simply shift the problem elsewhere. Make sure it will not cause problems when it melts. Piling snow over gullies or drains may stop melting snow from draining away and allow it to refreeze;
- ✓ Clear a small path down the middle of the area to be cleared first, so you have a safe surface to walk on. You can then shovel from the centre to the sides;
- ✓ Spread some grit on the area you have cleared to prevent ice forming. If necessary, ordinary table salt or dishwasher salt will work, but avoid spreading on plants or grass. Don't use too much; a tablespoon for each square metre cleared will be enough. It will take a little while to work;
- ✓ If there is no salt available, then a little sand or ash can be used. It will not have the same de-icing properties as salt but should offer grip under foot;
- ✓ Use the sun to your advantage. Removing the top layer of snow will allow the sun to melt any ice beneath, but you will need to cover any ice with salt to stop refreezing overnight;
- ✓ Salt can be washed away by further snowfalls or rain and then refreeze, leaving black ice. If this happens more salt should be used soon after the rain has stopped and before temperatures reach freezing;
- ✓ Particular care and attention should be given to steps and steep slopes. Additional salt could be used in these areas to reduce the risk of slipping;
- ✓ Try to sweep up any excess grit, sand or other substances used come the thaw, to prevent these from blocking drains;

There is no law preventing you from clearing snow and ice on the pavement outside or on paths to your house (or any other building you are responsible for).

- ✓ Provided you are careful, use common sense and don't do anything which would be likely to cause harm or distress to others, it is highly unlikely that you will be found responsible for any accidents. In fact, it's prudent to make sure your own property is safe for other people to use it. Users of areas affected by snow and ice also have responsibilities to be careful themselves;

For further information, and up to date weather, visit the Met Office web site:

 HM Government



www.metoffice.gov.uk/getreadyforwinter

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