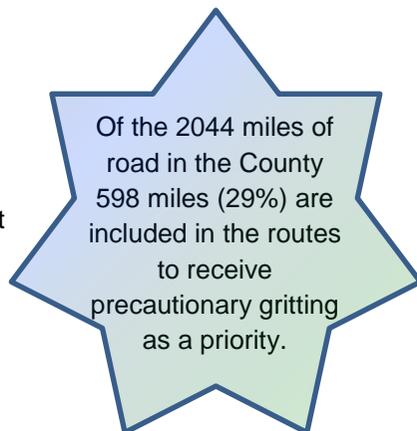


## From mid- October through to mid- April we provide a Winter Maintenance Service for nearly 600 miles of Herefordshire's roads.

This service includes the following activities:

- Pre-salting (gritting) to help prevent ice forming
- Post-salting (gritting) to melt ice and snow already formed
- Snow ploughing to remove snow
- Installing and refilling of grit bins



Winter maintenance is all about making our roads safe for public use. We can't grit all routes across the county so we have established **priority routes** to keep the traffic moving as much as we can whilst taking into account available budget and resource.

These routes are made up of A, B and other strategic and heavily trafficked roads. Trunk roads, including the M50 and the A49, are gritted by Highways England.

### What roads and footways are gritted and when?

Priority routes are pre-treated when local inspections and weather forecasts indicate a need. We have *crews on call 24 hours a day* who can react quickly to extreme weather conditions. Generally, all planned early morning treatments are completed before 7.30am and during periods of prolonged freezing or snow we aim to carry out gritting or snow clearing, whenever possible, on priority routes.

Full details can be found on the Herefordshire Council website, together with detailed maps of priority and secondary routes.

We have recently reassessed the routes to make the gritting service more efficient and relevant. Roads providing **access to schools** are treated as a high priority in times of severe or prolonged winter weather.

We are unable to carry out pre-gritting on all **footways** but a defined set of footways and cycle ways will also be treated in line with available resource and prevailing conditions.

Council run **public car parks** in Hereford city and the market towns will be treated when surface temperatures are expected to remain below freezing for 24 hours or more ice is predicted.

We have a duty to ensure, as far as reasonably practicable, that safe passage along a highway is not endangered by ice or snow. However, there is no guarantee that routes will be kept clear of slippery conditions and additional care should always be taken when driving in wintery conditions.

### How much salt is stocked and how is it applied?

- Under normal winter conditions we would usually salt between 60 and 100 times
- We have salt stocks of around 6,500 tons at the start of the winter period
- We use 15 gritters across the county and aim to complete all gritting routes in 2.5 hours, with a spare gritter available for backup or emergency cover.

Salt is spread at a rate of between 7.5 – 20 grams/m<sup>2</sup> depending on conditions. The quantity of salt spread is carefully controlled to be effective without causing unnecessary damage or pollution to verges, trees and watercourses. Should salt supplies become severely restricted, plans are in place for a phased reduction of the extent of routes treated.

Unfortunately, despite our best efforts gritting is not always effective for many reasons:

- Heavy rain can wash the salt away.
- Early morning frosts can be difficult to predict.
- Gritting during busy periods can be very difficult and ice can form before the gritters have completed their routes.

Our advice - adjust your speed and driving style to match individual road conditions.

### What are Roadside grit bins used for?

Grit from roadside bins is for use on public roads and footways and should not be removed for private use. Local residents are encouraged to use this on minor roads and footways which may not otherwise be treated.

## Can I clear snow and ice myself?

Residents should not be put off clearing footways because they are concerned someone will get injured. There is no law stopping individuals from clearing snow and ice on the footway outside their home or from public spaces as long as you feel fit and able to do so. The Department for Transport has written a snow code providing practical advice for householders wishing to clear snow outside their properties and this can be accessed by visiting [www.gov.uk/clear-snow-road-path-cycleway](http://www.gov.uk/clear-snow-road-path-cycleway).

### Driving Tips

Before travelling in wintery conditions consider:

- Is your journey essential?
- Allowing extra time to prepare the vehicle - Making sure all windows and mirrors are clean and clear from frost, ice or snow before taking off
- Carrying an ice scraper and de-icer
- Checking the weather forecast
- Checking your wipers and lights are working and that you have screen wash
- Is it useful to take a torch, blanket, food, wellingtons, mobile phone, warm clothing and a spade.
- Stopping distances can be significantly increased on icy conditions.

### Interesting Facts

- Salt works by lowering the freezing point of water but needs to be “run in” by passing vehicles to be effective
- Salt effectiveness reduces as the temperatures get lower. Below -6°C salt effectiveness is significantly reduced
- Road salt is supplied by a mine in Cheshire, one of only three places in the UK where rock salt is commercially mined and this is what we use to treat the highways.

Follow [@HfdsStreets](https://twitter.com/HfdsStreets) on Twitter for live updates on winter maintenance activities in Herefordshire during adverse weather conditions.



# Winter Gritting in Herefordshire