

Clearance of snow and ice policy



1. Introduction

The University remains open during poor weather, including during or following snowfall, and in icy conditions. Whilst individual Faculties or Services may make alternative attendance arrangements, the clearance of snow and ice will be undertaken on the assumption that all Faculties and Services will be operating as normal. Snow and ice clearance will be carried out with the aim of ensuring that this is possible by providing safe access as quickly as reasonably achievable.

All areas to be cleared of snow and ice will be planned and prioritised to ensure as swift an impact on risk as possible. The Grounds and Gardens Manager will co-ordinate deployment of staff resources.

All snow and ice clearance will be subject to the availability of resources. This includes but is not limited to stocks of rock salt or alternative products and the availability of rock salt nationally especially during prolonged periods of adverse weather when University held stocks may diminish.

2. Responsibilities

The Grounds and Gardens Team are responsible for campus care including snow and ice clearance.

When conditions are exceptional additional labour may be sought from other teams within Estates and Campus Services or from contractors. The Director of Estates and Campus Services in consultation with the Grounds and Gardens Manager will decide on when this is required and authorise the appropriate course of action to increase labour accordingly.

All staff, visitors, students, or any other person on University premises are expected to take due care to ensure their own safety in adverse conditions.

3. Areas of Priority

The following areas have been identified as requiring special attention at times when there may be no need to treat any other areas for snow and ice. This is due to their ability to retain a lower temperature and freeze sooner or allow snow to settle when the temperature is not as cold as required for many other areas:

- wooden decking
- rubber granular constructed impact safe pathway.

The priority areas for snow and ice clearance are:

- slopes, steps and exceptionally slippery surfaces, (i.e. metal walkways or ducting covers etc.)

- the University main and staff entrances including associated paths and crossings
- main pedestrian thoroughfares throughout the campus, access to academic and residential properties
- crossing points where footpaths cross the roadway whether formal or informal crossings
- access to facilities such as bins, recycling points, load areas for kitchens.

Off campus accommodation, teaching and study space will be addressed as quickly as possible in line with on campus accommodation, however, access to off campus accommodation may prove difficult should the adverse weather have caused heavy traffic preventing timely attendance.

Main Campus Roadways will be treated once pedestrian routes are cleared subject to resources.

4. Areas of No Action

To ensure service is provided to the most beneficial areas or due to the nature of the surface there are some locations that may receive no attention in respect of snow and ice clearance, these include:

- grass sports pitches
- synthetic sports/hockey pitch
- polymeric athletics track and infield areas
- footpaths and roadways not belonging to, or under the control of the University
- parking spaces (excepting some on slopes where accessible for treatment)
- water run-off (where water run-off from thawing snow and ice, or downpipes, roofs, or air handling units is constantly washing treated areas and re-freezing), as it would be impractical to constantly treat the same small area.

5. Extent of Work

When snow and ice is minimal and just localised areas require attention rock salt or a similar product will be applied directly onto slippery ice or thin layers of snow to thaw it. The Grounds and Gardens Manager will decide on the extent of work required to clear snow before application and advise the team doing so accordingly.

When snow is heavier and the depth makes treatment with rock salt more difficult to do successfully, pathways will be cleared to permit safe access to and from buildings prior to the application of rock salt.

Not all (direct) routes will be cleared from one location to the next but an alternative to the shortest route will be cleared which may involve a slight detour to join a main thoroughfare which will be cleared.

Pathways cleared of snow and treated with grit will be cleared to a width that permits movement in numbers adequate for the regular pedestrian traffic of the area but normally not less than wide enough that two people can pass safely. Consideration for adequate wheelchair access will also be made during clearance work.

Paths will not be cleared of snow without a treatment of rock salt or an alternative product directly afterwards as to do so could result in a more hazardous surface than to leave areas untouched.

Compacted snow that has formed a hard slippery layer on roads will be treated once all pedestrian routes are adequately clear to permit safe movement around the campus if resources, including stocks of rock salt permit.

6. Clearance Outside Working Hours

Clearance of snow and ice takes place during the core working hours of the Grounds Team.

Security will contact the Grounds and Gardens Manager or Director of Estates and Campus Services if the conditions on campus change and appear to require action to mobilise teams to deal with snow or ice.

When significant snow and ice clearance is required outside the working hours of the Grounds Staff the Grounds and Gardens Manager or Director of Estates and Campus Services will ask Grounds staff to attend site to assist. Contracted labour may be requested if adequate staff are unavailable.

Grit bins containing rock salt are distributed around the campus in various locations and these may be used to treat localised areas of snow or ice by Campus Services staff working a shift pattern outside the core working hours. This may include Security staff or Grounds staff working weekends.

7. Sports Surfaces

Grass and Artificial sports surfaces will be considered closed for use whilst covered in snow.

Frozen Grass and Artificial sports surfaces will be considered closed for use whilst frozen.

Decisions regarding safe playability of grass and artificial sports surfaces during periods of snow and ice will initially be made by the Grounds and Gardens Manager or Deputy Grounds and Gardens Manager when on duty or available.

Referees will make a final decision on the safe playability of grass and artificial sports surfaces during periods of snow and ice upon arrival at site. Earlier decisions made by Grounds Staff may be based on the likelihood of thawing, or affected by changes in weather conditions.

8. Special Events

In the event of a special event such as a VIP visit, wedding, or funeral any additional snow clearance requirements beyond what is standard practice should be communicated to the Department of Estates and Campus Services through the Facilities Helpdesk. Where possible the teams within Campus Services will attempt to accommodate extra snow clearance work. It is recommended that any additional areas are requested early enough to make snow clearance possible before compaction by vehicles or pedestrians straying from cleared routes.

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