

## **Roads and winter weather Q+A and key facts**

### **When will you start gritting the roads?**

Our team operates on a rota and will be available on 24hour standby until May. Using information about the weather and road conditions from a number of sources including Meteogroup a specialist road weather forecasting service, the MET office, road sensors and visual inspections of road conditions) our team will decide whether to take action and grit.

Why are the roads not gritted when I can see there is a frost on my car?

We take action when road surface temperatures are at or below freezing. Roads retain heat and do not cool as quickly, so frost on a car can be misleading. Gritting will usually take place when temperatures are forecast to reach 0°C or below and there is likely to be water present to form ice.

### **Why is my street not gritted regularly?**

The gritting routes have been carefully designed and adapted to ensure that we grit the primary, main routes within East Renfrewshire. These include bus routes and heavily trafficked routes. These are:

- main 'A' roads
- access to fire stations
- bus routes to schools
- main bus routes, and
- routes to local employment areas

The routes have been designed to cover as much of the network as possible within our resources. During poor weather conditions resources are targeted to the areas of greatest need.

### **How do I know which roads will be gritted as a priority?**

The network of priority roads that we treat and grit is shown on the council web site [roads and gritting page](#).

### **Which footways do you treat?**

As part of our priority footway routes we treat 64km of footways. These are treated with the following as a priority:

- Urban shopping areas and precincts.
- Other areas of high pedestrian concentration such as station approaches.
- Steep hills in housing areas and in the vicinity of old people's homes /sheltered housing.
- At least one footway along the frontage of each school is gritted.
- Fixed gritting routes are pre-planned by the roads team to ensure that, during normal winter conditions, those footways on the routes would be gritted, usually, but not exclusively, in the morning when considered appropriate.

### **What causes delays or problems for gritting?**

Parked vehicles can stop our large gritters from accessing some roads. Remember, most of our gritting vehicles are single manned with the drivers working in the dark early in the morning, and in very poor weather/visibility. The gritters are large vehicles and cannot easily reverse and so vehicles that are stuck or badly parked on roads can cause problems for access – resulting in some streets becoming inaccessible to gritters.

Also if the gritting has to take place at busy periods, for example during rush hour on a morning or evening this can slow things down and the gritters may become delayed in traffic.

### **Can I request for a road or footway to be gritted?**

Please remember that East Renfrewshire has 475km of roads and 700km of footway. That's enough to go from here to Edinburgh and back three times. We have included 313km of road (this is around 65 per cent, which is more than most councils) and 64km of footways in our priority routes.

We have a resource which is fully committed and utilised to keep our network as safe as possible during the adverse winter weather. To have a robust winter service the gritting operations have to be planned and executed in a pre-determined fashion to achieve the maximum efficiency. This involves methodically treating routes on a priority basis and operating strictly in line with our defined procedures.

Only on a request from the police would we divert from our treatment priorities.

Roads and footways other than those on the priority routes will have to wait until the priority routes have been successfully treated and gritting resources become available.

It is difficult to add extra roads or footways as we are already fully committed during severe conditions but all requests for assistance are noted and assistance provided when resources from our priority operations become available.

Remember not every street is easily accessible, particularly cul de sacs. Problems can often occur with parked cars making it difficult for gritters to manoeuvre and turn. If a gritter gets stuck it means that it is not attending to other roads.

### **What if I need medical assistance and can't get out of my house due to bad weather?**

If we receive a request from the ambulance service or police for emergency assistance this will be passed to our teams who will assist as soon as they can.

### **Please remember:**

The unexpected nature of the Scottish weather can often mean that the freeze/thaw/freeze cycle along with rain requires us to continually revisit and re-treat our priority gritting routes both carriageway and footways.

Most people reasonably recognise that main roads, access to fire stations and bus routes need to come first before smaller streets are done.

Grit bins are in place to make sure that residents can get access to grit for their local roads and pavements. It means that communities can help themselves, which is particularly important during prolonged cold spells when the council's roads service needs to focus on keeping main routes open and moving across the area.

There are links on the council website re winter maintenance [gritting routes and grit bin locations](#):