

# FactSheet

www.islandroads.com

October 2021

## **Working to keep our roads safe during the winter** *A guide to our winter service on the Island*

Island Roads is responsible for maintaining a safe highway network and that includes work during the winter months to ensure the Island's roads are kept clear of obstructions, flooding, snow, and ice wherever possible.

That work starts in the autumn months and continues right through until the end of March each year, although our gritters remain on standby for any forecast low temperatures outside of these times.

### **Preparing for winter**

#### **Checking cat's eyes (road studs)**

Each year in the autumn all road studs or cat's eyes as they are better known are checked ahead of the long, dark winter months. This is done at night by our district stewards across all 131km of the Island's road network where road studs are in place. Those that are defective or missing are replaced.

#### **Checking roadside ditches**

Our district stewards also check roadside ditches are clear of debris, so they channel rainwater off or away from the highway and help prevent flooding on the highway.

However, many more of the roadside ditches belong to local land and property owners. It is their responsibility, by law, to ensure ditches are kept clear and land adequately drained to prevent water, earth, and vegetation from entering onto the highway area.



For more information on these responsibilities please view our leaflet ['Working together to ditch highway flooding'](#) .

#### **Inspecting and clearing fallen trees**

Dying or damaged trees pose a greater risk in high winter winds or when the earth beneath is saturated, so we inspect those that are part of the highway network and take appropriate action to ensure they do not affect highway users. We also have teams on standby throughout the

winter to deal with fallen trees blocking the highway. To report a fallen tree, contact 01983 822440.

Private landowners must safely manage trees that affect the highway. We have produced a leaflet [“Inspect and Protect”](#) which explains how Islanders can ensure their trees do not pose a risk to highway users.

### Clearing leaf fall

Leaf fall can also cause an issue, particularly in autumn as trees shed their leaves. At this time, additional steps are taken to prevent this vegetation causing a safety hazard on the highway and/or entering (and compromising) the gully system. In the autumn months, we therefore deploy additional mechanical and manual sweeping resources to help tackle leaf fall and keep drains, gullies, and pavements as clear as possible.



### Cleansing highway gullies



This time of year, we also begin our enhanced winter gully cleansing regime. Between now and March this additional gully cleansing, targets areas of the network most prone to flooding to help reduce the risk of water accumulating on the highway during wet winter weather.

You can watch a video on our [gully cleansing operations](#) on our website.

### Our autumn parade

Each year part of our preparations for the winter months includes our autumn parade when we make sure our fleet and crews are prepared for any challenges ahead.

Towards the end of October each year, we carry out a weekend of activities where our drivers are briefed on the latest health and safety updates, test all the vehicles in the depot and then drive the routes to familiarise themselves with the individual gritting runs.



### During the winter months

#### Gritting the roads – our vehicle fleet

Our depot at Stag Lane is home to our six frontline gritters, back-up and specialist vehicles as well as the Island's road salt supply. We begin each year with a stockpile of 1,600 tonnes which is more than enough to cope with even exceptionally severe winter weather. For example, during the winter of 2020-21 there were 53 runs using 1019 tonnes of salt. We can always obtain additional supplies in the unlikely event they are required.

Around 50 staff are based at the depot which also houses our gully-emptying and street cleansing teams.

Our state-of-the-art gritters are fitted with 'pre-wet' technology which sprays salt with a brine solution prior to spreading. This limits salt drifting on to grass verges or hedges and helps the salt stick to the road. Though people refer to grit, the substance used is actually graded rock salt.

## Where do we grit the roads in winter?

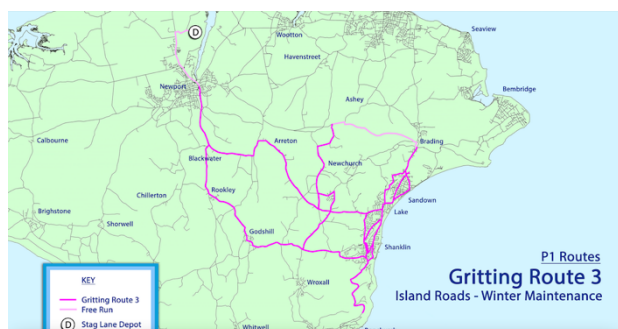
Not all roads are treated. The Isle of Wight Council determines which roads are treated in freezing weather. The Council's focus is on the Island's key routes (main roads and those connecting towns) as it is not practical or economical to salt every road. We apply grit to over 350km of road, which represents around 43% of the highway network. Maps of our gritting routes can be found below and on our website [www.islandroads.com/winter-service/](http://www.islandroads.com/winter-service/) with the areas being covered as follows:



Area 1: Newport, East Cowes, Whippingham, Wootton, Havenstreet, Binstead, Ryde



Area 2: Newport, Arreton, Ashey, Brading, Seaview, St Helens, Bembridge



Area 3: Newport, Blackwater, Rookley, Godshill, Shanklin, Lake, Sandown, Newchurch, Arreton



Area 4: Newport, Carisbrooke, Chilton, Chale, Niton, Whitwell, St Lawrence, Ventnor, Wroxall, Godshill, Rookley



Area 5: Newport, Carisbrooke, Calbourne, Freshwater Bay, Brook, Brighstone, Shorwell



Area 6: Newport, Gunville, Cowes, Gurnard, Northwood, Porchfield, Shalfleet, Yarmouth, Freshwater, Totland, Calbourne



## When do we grit the roads in winter?

We ensure the highways are gritted whenever freezing or close to zero temperatures are forecast. We receive special localised weather reports, carry out our own observations and take into account readings from two weather stations on the Island at Brading Down and on the Middle Road. These two stations represent one of the highest points on the Island and one of the lowest. This helps us decide when to mobilise our gritting vehicles.

## What happens when it snows?



We are fortunate that the Island does not often experience heavy snowfall, but we remain prepared for it nevertheless. Among our fleet of vehicles, we also have snow ploughs that can be mobilised to clear roads if required.

We work closely with the Isle of Wight Council and its Emergency Management team during periods of heavy snow to try to maintain essential travel.

[You can watch a video all about our winter service on our website.](#)

## Winter driving advice

Please remember that salting helps prevent ice from forming above -4 degrees centigrade, there are occasions where conditions mean that roads can still ice over, so please drive to the conditions and take extra care in freezing weather.

Further advice on driving in freezing conditions can be found via the following link <https://www.theaa.com/driving-advice/seasonal/winter>

## Report a problem

To report a problem on the highway network simply click on the [Report it Online](#) section of our website. There you will be able to check if the issue has already been reported and if not, you can enter details to report the problem. The system can also provide updates on progress. Alternatively, you can email [info@islandroads.com](mailto:info@islandroads.com) with the relevant details.

In an emergency where there is a threat to public safety, for example, a fallen tree blocking the highway, please call 01983 822440. This phonenumber is manned 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

**You can visit our website for more details about any of our services [www.islandroads.com](http://www.islandroads.com)**