

Press release: Highways England is geared up for winter

The company responsible for the country's motorways and main A roads has more than 280,000 tonnes of salt, over 500 salt spreading vehicles ready around the clock to help drivers get to their destinations safely.

Roads Minister, Jesse Norman said:

It is essential to keep our road network running throughout the winter.

Highways England has informed us that they are well prepared for adverse weather, with enough salt to cover 610,000 miles of our motorways.

But the expert advice is clear: drivers need to make their own judgements about road conditions. If it doesn't look safe then they should stay put and travel once weather conditions have improved.

Highways England's national winter and severe weather team leader, Paul Furlong, said:

We care about people getting to their destinations safely and during any severe weather our teams will be working around the clock to keep traffic moving.

We're asking drivers to make sure they and their vehicles are also prepared. Before you set out, check your vehicle, the road conditions and the weather forecast. If conditions are poor, and journeys are not essential, consider waiting until the weather gets better – this should improve journeys, and give our gritters a chance to treat the roads.'

To help keep traffic moving, Highways England has nearly 130 winter service depots across the country, and more than 250 environmental sensor stations that provide real-time monitoring of road weather conditions and temperatures.

Highways England is urging drivers not to use the hard shoulder to undertake gritters, risking a collision with a stationary vehicle and causing a hazard when gritters try to come off at junctions.

Drivers are asked not to take unnecessary risks this winter and only pass a gritter when it is safe to do so, avoiding using the hard shoulder and checking for hazards ahead.

During severe weather drivers are urged to follow this advice:

- In snow and ice, drivers should stick to the main roads where they can and only travel if necessary
- drivers are also encouraged to make sure they have a winter kit in their vehicle, including an ice scraper and de-icer, warm clothes and blankets and sunglasses to cope with the low winter sun
- In high winds, there's a particular risk to lorries, caravans and motorbikes, so drivers should slow down and avoid using exposed sections of road if possible
- In heavy rain, drivers should keep well back from the vehicle in front, gradually ease off the accelerator if the steering becomes unresponsive, and slow down if the rain and spray from vehicles makes it difficult to see and be seen
- In fog, drivers should switch on their fog lights and not use lights on full beam as the fog will reflect the light back – if you really cannot see, you should consider stopping until it is safe to continue

Drivers are advised to follow messages on the overhead signs and listen to radio updates. Further information can be found by [visiting our traffic information website](#) or calling the Highways England Information Line on 0300 123 5000.

General enquiries

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Media enquiries

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.