

Gritting

Policy ref: Estate services

Policy author/policy holder: Estate services contracts Manager

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Approved by: RISG/MOSICA

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Date of next review: Sept 2019

1:: Purpose and anticipated outcomes

Snow and ice is obviously a problem for all our employees, residents and visitors. It's our intention to have a practical approach throughout all our properties incorporating a form of a risk assessment.

The risk assessment will include considering the risk to staff and residents but specifically to those with mobility issues. It will be based on the advice that during snow and ice conditions only essential journeys should be taken.

Our staff will be informed of safe working practices through our Bad Weather Policy. Our residents will be kept up to date of any developments, plans or major changes to our Gritting Policy.

2:: Scope and definitions

The policy will cover all properties within Knightstone, either tenanted or leasehold, and relates only to homes with communal (shared) paths and to Knightstone offices.

It is not a landlord or employer responsibility to grit those areas that are the responsibility of local councils or highways management agencies. We do not grit communal car parks, playgrounds, footpaths to individual homes or driveways to those homes, whether rented or purchased.

Where residents have been consulted and where they and Knightstone have agreed to a defined gritting service, the costs of that service will be included in the grounds maintenance charge. The cost of this work will be met through the service charge paid by those residents.

3:: About this policy

Identifying priority sites

It is not reasonable, practical or cost effective for residents to grit all paths in all of the communal areas on our land. We manage over 11,000 homes and there are not enough resources to be able to provide this service for each estate or block of flats.

We must prioritise schemes with the highest numbers or concentrations of vulnerable residents.

For schemes identified as priority sites, we will lay grit or clear snow in the following areas:

- External paths to laundries and bins
- The path from the main entrance to the car park (but not the car park itself)
- The path from the main entrance to the boundary exit
- External steps and steep inclines within the boundary

Services for residents in blocks where formal arrangements have been agreed

During severe weather estate supervisors can suspend normal duties in order to lay grit/clear snow or can arrange for external services to provide grit laying / snow clearing services that will be chargeable to the residents. This is mostly within our older peoples schemes.

Services for residents in blocks where formal arrangements are not in place

If the residents wish to have a gritting/snow clearing service a contractor will be employed and the cost will be recovered through service charges to residents.

Offices owned by Knightstone

During severe weather KHA will arrange for contractors to lay grit /clear snow on car parks, external paths and steps within the owned boundaries to the best of their ability and if weather conditions and supplies permit.

Agency Managed schemes

It is the Agency's responsibility to lay grit/clear snow as defined by their own Gritting Policy.

Responsibilities

It is KHA's decision which staff or external provider should provide a service to which priority sites in order to best use the resources available.

We will co-ordinate and communicate with residents to ensure that information is available to them regarding:

- Whether the weather is severe enough for us to provide this service
- To provide information about which schemes have, or are to be, gritted / cleared

Exceptional circumstances

No matter how accurate the forecast, we cannot grit prior to icy conditions.

Such examples of these conditions are:

- When rain is followed by rapidly clear skies, gritting would only have any effect after the rain has stopped to avoid the salt being washed away into the drainage system, temperatures can drop by as much as 5°C per hour. In these cases wet paths may well freeze before there is a chance to grit them
- When a dawn frost occurs and early morning dew develops, it may fall on cold paths and steps and then freezes on impact. It is impossible to forecast with any accuracy where and when it will occur.
- When rain turns to snow coinciding with the start of a normal (Mon - Fri) working day, early gritting cannot take place as it would be washed into the drainage system.

4:: Service standards, monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years or earlier in response to changes in practice or legislation.

The use of contractors will be monitored to ensure we are receiving value for money.

5:: Legal considerations

There is no law that compels a landlord to grit/clear snow in communal areas. We do, however, have a common law of duty of care under the Occupiers Liability Act and we want our residents to be safe as far as possible.

6:: Linked/associated policies and other references

Policies and procedures:

- Gritting procedure for older people's services
- Health and safety policy
- Equality and diversity policy
- Bad weather policy
- Neighbourhood and estate services policy and procedures