



# Winter Gritting Policy

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Version 1

**Approved by:** Executive Team  
**Approved date:** 9 May 2019

## 1.0 Introduction

1.1 We have a duty of care to anyone who uses our land<sup>1</sup> and to ensure the health and safety of employees, so far as is reasonably practicable<sup>2</sup>. This Policy outlines how we'll meet these legal duties by:

- Identifying and controlling risks to staff, residents, and visitors in adverse winter weather
- Outlining how we'll maintain safe access to premises for staff and residents during winter
- Clarifying the areas where we'll clear snow and spread grit.

1.2 We are unable to guarantee every footpath will be ice-free at all times, even at our priority sites. All staff, residents and visitors are responsible for taking appropriate care in poor weather.

1.3 The terms 'we', 'our', and 'us' mean Optivo.

## 2.0 Responsibilities

### 2.1 Directors of Property Services

Responsible for ensuring:

- Estate Services Teams (including Direct Labour Operatives (DLO) and appointed contractors) and Facilities Management Teams are aware of this Policy
- Sufficient resources are allocated and available to implement this Policy, dependent on weather conditions.

### 2.2 Heads of Estate Services, Head of Property Services (Midlands) and Head of Facilities Management

Responsible for ensuring:

- The list of priority sites and grit bin locations is maintained and reviewed annually in October
- Staff, Direct Labour Organisation (DLO) and/or appointed contractors are aware of the priority sites they're required to grit and clear snow, and carry out their work to a suitable standard
- Any practical problems raised by staff, DLO or appointed contractors are responded to and dealt with as needed.

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<sup>1</sup> Under the Occupiers Liability Act 1957 and 1984

<sup>2</sup> Under the Health & Safety at Work etc. Act 1974

## **2.3 Estate Services Staff, Estate Maintenance Officers, Caretakers, DLO, and Appointed Contractors**

Responsible for:

- Clearing snow and gritting in a safe and responsible manner
- Ensuring they've access to equipment needed to be able to safely carry out winter gritting and snow clearance duties
- Reporting any practical problems to their line manager, relevant Head of Estate Services, Head of Property Services (Midlands), or Head of Facilities Management.

## **3.0 Where will we grit and clear snow?**

3.1 We will only clear snow and spread grit on land categorised as a Priority Site, including offices. We will determine priority sites based on where:

- Daily access is required by our staff or partnership agencies in our offices, supported housing schemes, student or keyworker sites
- The site is designated Housing for Older People (HOPs), an Extra Care scheme or care home.

3.2 Within priority sites, we will only clear snow and spread grit on:

- Land owned and managed by us
- One footpath providing access to the main communal front entrance door of the scheme or office, and any fire exit doors.

## **4.0 When will we clear snow and grit?**

4.1 The regional Heads of Estate Services, Head of Property Services (Midlands) and Head of Facilities Management will monitor weather conditions. They will decide when to grit and clear snow, taking into account:

- Forecast temperatures and Met Office Weather Warnings for ice
- Duration of freezing conditions
- Safety of travelling conditions for staff and contractors
- Whether safe access is possible
- Whether supplies are available
- Quantity of salt/grit supplies, and/or
- Contracted Terms of Service.

We will not provide precautionary gritting for frost under normal winter weather conditions.

4.2 Estate Services staff, DLO and/ or appointed contractors will aim to visit our priority sites every three working days (Monday to Friday, excluding Bank Holidays) during adverse winter weather conditions, providing weather conditions allow and resources are available.

We will only clear snow and spread grit after heavy snowfall has stopped. And when the regional Heads of Estate Services, Head of Property Services (Midlands) or Head of Facilities Management agree driving conditions safe enough for staff, DLO, and

contractors. The local Facilities Manager will decide how often offices need to be visited based on frequent checks.

- 4.3 We will take play areas out of use when expected prolonged periods of snow and ice are forecast. This will be by locking the gate or putting up a notice advising the play equipment is unsafe to use (see Play Area Management Plan).

## **5.0 Grit bins for resident use**

- 5.1 We will refill grit bins we've supplied as often as necessary between 30 November and 31 March, dependent on supplies.

- 5.2 Residents can use grit at their own discretion to provide safe access to their property in areas we're unable to grit. We will not be held responsible for misapplication or misuse of the grit we provide. To safely spread grit around the property:

- Use a shovel to clear new snow before applying grit
- Use grit sparingly to clear paths, pavements, roads and steps outside the front of the property if they're covered in snow or ice
- Don't use hot water to clear snow or ice
- Don't put grit down the drain as it may clog and cause blockages.

- 5.3 Residents can request grit bins. We will consider whether to provide a grit bin based on the following factors:

- A high proportion of Optivo residents are affected or likely to be affected by restricted mobility
- Hazardous site features (e.g. steep slopes)
- Whether staff would be able to easily and safely refill the grit bin in the proposed location
- Whether residents would be able to easily and safely access the grit bin in the proposed location.

## **6.0 Review**

- 6.1 We will review this Policy regularly to address best practice, legislative, regulatory or operational issues.