

FACTSHEET

Salting facts and figures...

Why does Transport for Buckinghamshire not salt every road in the county?

Cost: Rock salt is supplied to the local authority at a cost and there is a limited budget available for winter maintenance.

Suitability: Salt works most effectively on well used roads as the tyre motion plays a key role in the process. It is a better management of a limited resource to target such roads. In severe cold weather, below -8°C , even salt will not prevent ice from forming.

Availability: Rock salt production is not sufficient in this country to salt every road. This was only too apparent in the winter of 2009–10 when a prolonged period of cold weather put pressure on the national salt supplies. Orders to local authorities were cancelled by central government who then took control of the distribution of supplies. Local authorities were instructed to cut down on their precautionary salting routes and the council had to set in place the emergency salting routes.

Environment: Salting at the current level of 43% of the road network is not deemed to have a significant impact on the local environment. However damage to roadside plant life is evident at the end of the season.

Though seepage into water courses is deemed to be at safe levels if TfB were to salt 100% of the network on a precautionary policy, we would see saline seepage into water courses at more harmful levels.

So how does Transport for Buckinghamshire decide which roads they treat?

TfB salt a network of key roads that provide passage around the county. These roads are known as Precautionary Routes and are salted routinely whenever a decision to salt is made.



www.buckscc.gov.uk/transport
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These roads consist of all A and B class roads and some C and unclassified roads. Further information can be found on the TfB Service Information Centre including maps of the routes, updates of gritting decisions and you can also track the gritters live.

At times, if salt stocks are low, these routes have to be reduced to what we refer to as Emergency Routes.

When all precautionary routes have been adequately treated, a decision may be made in a cold spell to salt what we refer to as Secondary Routes. These routes will generally be roads that will create links to roads on the precautionary routes improving the network. They are also roads that will provide improved access to key facilities.

In the course of a prolonged cold spell, when all precautionary and secondary routes are clear of ice, a decision may be made to salt other roads. This depends on salt stocks and does not include residential cul-de-sacs and private roads.

Assessment: Roads are risk assessed and scored on a point system. Please note that points can be deducted on grounds of practicality:

Category	Points
Gradients	0 / 4 / 10 / 20
Bends (roads over 40mph)	0 / 4 / 10
Community link (200+houses)	5
Traffic Flows	0 / 10 / 20
Historically salted route	5
Public and School Bus Routes	0 or 15
Adjacent key facilities	10
Route practicality and efficiency	add/deduct points

A road will need to score on more than one issue to gain enough points to qualify for attention. A minimum of 28 points are required.

Trained and experienced inspectors carry out these assessments and the routes are decided before the winter season. If a parish would like to have a road assessed, it may not be looked at until the following season and no guarantee will be made that it will be added to the treated network.

How are we doing so far?

10th December

Since the beginning of the season in October, when we started to monitor the road temperatures, we have been out salting the roads a total of 11 times. All the grit bins were filled during September and October and parishes were offered a special deal on tonne bags of salt.

We held briefing sessions for our County Councillors and for the press where our plans were presented in more detail. Further details, including a video on our preparation for winter, can be viewed online - visit our Winter Maintenance pages on our Service Information Centre at www.bucksgov.uk/transport

This site will be kept up to date through the season, using the blog, and our daily gritting decisions can also be seen here.