

Gritting FAQs



Q1. “Why don’t I get a gritter in my local area?”

The money that each of us pays contributes towards a total pot of £4.4m for these services, which is enough for us to salt 1,869 miles (3,008km) of Lincolnshire's vast road networks, including all A and B roads. As a percentage of our total network, that's 35% - an excellent service and excellent value.

However, to grit absolutely everywhere including side streets and estates would require that £4.4m to become £12m, and our current 43 gritters would have to become 253. So it's simply not possible.

Q2. “Why don’t you treat my road?”

Like every other authority worldwide, we’d love to grit everywhere, but it’s simply impossible. Instead, we have to choose priority routes which will protect as many people as possible. Also, if we did treat lesser-used roads, the salt wouldn’t work as well, as it needs a reasonable flow of traffic to churn it up with the ice to form the brine, which is actually what melts the ice.

Q3. “Do you grit pavements?”

We work to our full capacity salting 1,869 miles (3,008km) of Lincolnshire's main roads – including all A and B roads – so we cannot routinely salt footways as well.

However, we do treat some priority footpaths during severe weather and work closely with a variety of local organisations for their support in tackling footpaths. Even they can’t get everywhere though and, when ice is particularly compacted on paths, salt doesn’t always cut through it anyway.

That’s why we encourage self-help; Lincolnshire has a massive 2,796 miles (4,500kms) of footway so residents shouldn’t simply rely on our limited number of council contractors to clear their paths and roads, especially on lower-priority housing estates and side-streets.

Did you know?...

- Lincolnshire has a huge total of 8,389 miles (13,500km) of roads and pavements. The Earth's circumference is 24,855 miles (40,000km), so if all our roads and paths were laid end to end, they would stretch a third of the way around the World - reaching Darwin in Australia.

Q4. “If I clear snow or treat ice myself but then someone has an accident where I cleared, won’t I be sued?”

In short - no. This is an urban myth which has, understandably, stopped people from clearing their own areas in the past. Thankfully, the Government’s 2010 Snow Code, which we pushed for, reassures people they would be unlikely to be liable if someone fell and hurt themselves after they had cleared paths outside their homes. This is unless you do something particularly irresponsible, such as throwing down hot water which would then re-freeze. Full details can be viewed at www.direct.gov.uk/en/NI1/Newsroom/DG_191868.



To help, the county council provides and refills almost 1900 grit bins, located at approved locations for the public, parish and town councils to use on a self-help basis.

Did you know?...

- The Government expects each authority to treat a third of its area. Despite Lincolnshire having the UK’s third biggest road network, we still meet and in fact exceed that expectation, gritting 35% of routes.

Q5. “Why can’t you just grit pavements outside schools and in high-pedestrian areas such as city centres?”

*When we **do** have sufficient time and staff to help out with pavements, we must prioritise well-used pavements and those which are steepest. We fully appreciate that people will point out other footways which are dangerous or key to local events, but as we can only choose a select few, we must prioritise based on safety risks.*

However, we also work closely with various local organisations and councils, providing grit where possible, and they will also attempt to tackle some pavements with the manpower they have.

Q6. “How do I request a grit bin near me?”

Because we can’t put an unlimited number of grit bins just anywhere, we have a scoring system for new requests. This makes sure that the bins are in a safe and suitable spot to be used, that a responsible body looks after the bin and lets us know when it needs refilling, and that it will be used on our maintainable public highways. We also need to make sure it will benefit a good number of people and isn’t too near existing grit bins.

If you are a body (such as a business, Parish Council, Residents’ Association etc) willing to take responsibility for a grit bin and would like to request a new one, or would like further information, please contact our Customer Service Team for details on 01522 782070.

Q7. “Where is my nearest grit bin?”

To find out where your nearest grit bin is, please contact the Highways Customer Service Centre. They can be reached by telephone on 01522 782070 or by filling out a form on our website at – www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/highwaysreporting. We will soon have these viewable on a GIS mapping system online too.

Did you know?...

- Lincolnshire has 5,592 miles (9,000kms) of roads and 2,796 miles (4,500km) of footways. Of that, we treat 1,869 miles (3,008km) of roads on our priority routes.

Q8. “Can I use the grit for personal use, such as on my own drive? I’ve seen some people taking lots away in vans before.”

No. The grit must be used on a public highway so it benefits as many people in the community as possible. There are over 698,000 residents in Lincolnshire, so if everyone took grit for their own property, we would soon run out!

To take great quantities of salt away from a grit bin for use elsewhere is theft, and a highly irresponsible one at that. If you see anyone loading salt into a vehicle from your local grit bin, please report it to the Police.



Q9. “Why can’t you treat every bus route?”

To salt every single public and school bus route in Lincolnshire would require over 4,350 miles (7,000km) of road to be covered and would need 105 gritters compared to our current 43, so is simply unrealistic.

However, every school in Lincolnshire, both primary and secondary, has a salted route which goes within 500 yards of the entrance and in most cases passes the gate. We always request that our bus company contractors use this route and all are sent a salting routes map and guidance leaflet each year.

Q10. “A road near me was supposed to be salted, but wasn’t. Why not?”

There are several reasons why people don't think that salting has taken place where it actually has. We use a particularly high-purity white salt which is not always visible to the human eye. It also takes time for the salt to become effective after it is spread, and salt on its own will not remove snow - it requires the action of traffic to mix it up and form brine first.

Also, rain can sometimes wash salt off roads, leaving them prone to re-icing. At -8, salt starts to become significantly less effective and at -15 is completely ineffective. Therefore, despite the very high level of service that we provide, it can never be guaranteed that roads will be completely clear of ice; motorists should take extreme care on routes whether they have been treated or not.

Salt should therefore be seen as a huge help, but not a complete cure.

As salt takes time to work, spreading takes place at carefully considered times ahead of when ice formation is expected and on lying snow for it to have the best chance of working.

Did you know?...

- Lincolnshire's road network is huge - the North Division alone is the size of Bedfordshire and our East Division is the same size as all of Northamptonshire.

Q11. “I’ve heard stories of some areas running out of salt – do we have enough?”



*Yes - barring significantly unprecedented conditions, we have **more** than enough salt. In 2009/10, 32,000 tonnes of salt were used and in 2010/11, 30,000 tonnes were used. We started the 2011/12 winter with a huge 42,000 tonnes available to us, bought at a cheaper rate to the taxpayer by purchasing in bulk over the summer.*

We were not among the authorities to run out in previous years. In fact at one point during the 2009/2010 season, we held 7% of the national stock and had more salt than the whole of London. We also supplied a number of less fortunate authorities as part of a mutual aid scheme during the shortages. Just under 3000 tonnes were sold to these authorities to help them with their depleted stocks, all whilst maintaining our own efforts for Lincolnshire.

We get our salt from Egypt as it is some of the purest in world. Our CO2 emissions are also lower. It's extremely fine, so we need less of it because it cuts through ice more quickly. Quite simply, it's perfect to use on our roads and helps keep the county moving as best as possible in freezing conditions.

Q12. "Which roads are treated?"

The network of priority routes provides links from all main villages to the county's strategic road networks. We give priority to routes comprising Lincolnshire's A and B-class roads, plus links to all the county's main villages. Where it's physically possible to do so, a treated link is provided to within 500 metres of all primary and secondary schools, all main NHS hospitals and all railways and bus stations.



Q13. "How do I get a road or path added to the gritting route?"

All routes are set at the start of the winter and programmed into the gritters' satellite spreading systems. Please note that we are only able to review requests before the winter maintenance season starts so that we can fully review the likely impact on the network if the request was successful.

Requests for additions to the network need to be made in writing to the Divisional Highways Office for the area you are requesting is gritted.

- **Highways North (Caistor, Gainsborough, Tealby, Market Rasen, Saxilby, Lincoln)** 4th Floor, City Hall, Lincoln, LN1 1DN. Tel: 01522 782070 Email: LCCHighwaysNorth@lincolnshire.gov.uk
- **Highways West (Sleaford, Grantham, Bourne, Stamford, Market Deeping)**
County Offices, Annex C, Eastgate, Sleaford, NG34 7EB
Tel: 01522 782070 Email: LCCHighwaysWest@lincolnshire.gov.uk
- **Highways East (Louth, Mablethorpe, Wragby, Sutton on Sea, Alford, Horncastle, Skegness, Spilsby, W. Spa)** LCC Highways Depot, Manby Middlegate, Grimoldby, LN11 8SU
Tel: 01522 782070 Email: LCCHighwaysEast@lincolnshire.gov.uk
- **Highways South (Boston, Kirton, Donington, Spalding, Holbeach and Crowland)**
Municipal Buildings, West Street, Boston, PE21 8QR
Tel: 01522 782070 Email: LCCHighwaysSouth@lincolnshire.gov.uk

Did you know?...

- To be at its most effective, salt doesn't work by itself – it requires the motion of traffic to churn it into a brine.

View these online at www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/maintenanceprogramme and click Contacts.

(Phone lines are open Mon-Fri 8am-6pm and are closed on Bank Holidays)

Did you know?...

- Each of our 43 gritters are staffed by two people during severe weather and take around three hours to complete their runs.

Q14. “My road/path isn’t on the gritting route, but we’re snowed in / it’s really dangerous - can you come out and grit or plough?”

During the winter maintenance period, our vehicles are dedicated to keeping the primary network clear and we rarely have the time or resources available to treat roads or footpaths that aren’t on these routes. If you are able to,

you can clear snow and ice yourself as long as you do so in a safe manner. However, if you feel it is very urgent you can notify Lincolnshire County Council of the situation by contacting the Highways Customer Service Centre. Wherever possible we ask that this is done online by filling a form out at www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/highwaysreporting

If you do not have internet access, you can contact the team by telephone on 01522 782070.

Due to limited resources, we cannot guarantee we will be able to clear the snow or ice. In case of any emergency, always ring 999 first.

Q15. “Where can I buy salt from?”

Salt suitable for spreading on the road or path can be purchased from any reputable builders’ merchants or hardware store. You will often find in the run-up to winter that supermarkets and houseware stores will stock salt as well.



Q16. “What else can I use instead of salt?”

If you can’t find any road salt to use, then you can use table salt. Alternatively, builders sand, play sand and even cat litter have been used as a last resort by homeowners to provide grip on a slippery surface, although it won’t help melt the snow. In fact a mixture of sand/salt (50/50) is best used during snow and packed ice, as the sand cuts through the snow and ice and the salt melts it.

Did you know?...

- Salt becomes significantly less effective at -8 and stops making any difference at all at -15. It also struggles to cut into any tightly-compacted snow.

Q17. “I am a farmer/plant owner. How do I tender my services to you?”

You can tender your services by completing the tender paperwork and submitting to the area highways office. The paperwork can be downloaded from our website at: www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/snowclearingworks

If you do not have internet access you can contact the Highways Customer Service Centre. They can be reached by telephone on – 01522 782070 – and they will send one through the post. If you are enquiring during the middle of a severe snow event, then please ring the team directly on the number above.

Q18. “I cannot get to work/get my child to school because of the snow/ice. How do I claim compensation for loss of earnings?”

Lincolnshire County Council are under a duty to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that safe passage along a highway is not endangered by snow or ice. However, we are not obliged and it is not possible to ensure that every road and path in our area is completely free of snow or ice. As a result, we cannot accept any claims for loss of earnings as a result of being delayed or unable to travel due to snow and ice.

Q19. “I am elderly/disabled/vulnerable and snowed in. Is there any assistance you can offer?”

In times of severe weather conditions, Lincolnshire County Council will operate a 'Vulnerable Adults' service. This will be promoted via press releases, radio and TV in the area and on the LCC website at www.lincolnshire.gov.uk. The promotion will include full details of how to contact the service when it is set up. Always ring 999 in an Emergency. Lincolnshire Police's non-emergency number is 101.



Q20. How do I find out if:

- my bus/train/taxi is still running?

Please contact the service operator. Their number can be found on the internet or in your telephone directory. The latest public transport information can be found by contacting Traveline East Midlands on 0871 200 22 33 or by visiting their website - www.travelineeastmidlands.co.uk. If you have booked through CallConnect or Dial-A-Ride, please contact the Matrix Booking Team on 0845 234 3344.

- my school transport is still operating?

In the first instance please contact the service operator for your child's school transport. Alternatively you can contact the Schools Transport team on: 01522 782020 (open Monday to Friday 8am to 6pm).

- my bins are still being collected?

Your household waste collection is organised by the district or borough council you pay your council tax to. To see a list of all the district and borough councils contact numbers please visit: <http://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/districtcouncils>.

- my carer will still be able to visit?

Please contact the Adult Social Care team in the first instance on 01522 782155.

- the mobile library is still operating?

During the winter months you can keep up to date with your mobile library routes by checking for any closures on the planned library closures page: <http://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/libraryclosures>. Alternatively you can contact our Libraries team on; 01522 782010 (open 8am to 7pm from Monday to Friday and 9am to 4pm on Saturdays).

- my local library is open?

During the winter months you can keep up to date with library opening hours by checking for any closures on the planned library closures page: <http://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/libraryclosures>. Alternatively you can contact our Libraries team on; 01522 782010 (open 8am to 7pm from Monday to Friday and 9am to 4pm on Saturdays).

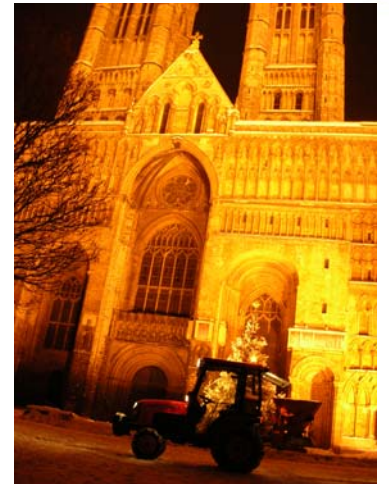
- my child's school is open?

Please contact the school directly or visit www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/schoolclosures.

Did you know?...

- The Highways Agency also treat 52 miles (92km) of roads in Lincolnshire, including the A1 and A46.

You can also tune into local radio for details of school closures across the county. NB. If your child's school is an Academy, they may not notify us if they are closing so please speak to the Academy directly.



Did you know?...

- We closely monitor conditions 24/7 via regular communication with the Met Office, road surface temperature sensors, weather stations and traffic cameras.

Improve your safety on winter roads

Our safe winter driving tips can be viewed here: <http://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/winterdriving>

Top tips for clearing snow and ice include:

- start early before snow becomes compacted and turns to ice;
 - don't use hot water, which could form black ice;
- make a pathway down the middle of the area first, so you have a clear surface;
- think about where to put the snow you've cleared so it doesn't block paths or drainage channels;
 - be a good neighbour;
- and remember you can also use sand or ash as alternatives to salt.



If you have any other queries about gritting, or do not have internet access to view any of the links in these FAQs, please call our Highways Customer Service Centre on 01522 782070

To report a highways defect, call the number above or use the grey 'report' tab on the right at www.lincolnshire.gov.uk