

Safer driving this winter on West Berkshire roads

November 2020



West Berkshire
C O U N C I L

Why we salt roads

The purpose of the Winter Service is to allow, as far as reasonably possible, the safe movement of all highway users on designated roads throughout the District whilst keeping delays and accidents brought about by adverse winter weather conditions to a minimum.

When we salt roads

Decisions are based on road temperatures, rather than air temperatures, and salting is likely whenever road temperatures fall below zero and ice/hoar frost is forecast.

Other factors like moisture, heat retention and time of day or night will influence the decision. Application of salt is normally carried out after the evening peak traffic period or before the morning rush. This is because frost and ice do not normally affect road surfaces until late evening or early morning.

Which roads we salt

With such a large network, it would be unrealistic and uneconomic to attempt to treat all roads. The Council therefore treats the following designated networks:

Primary Treatment Network. This network comprises Class A and B roads and some busier lower class roads and is treated when frost or ice is forecast on the road surface.

Secondary Treatment Network. This network comprises other well-trafficked routes connecting smaller areas of population and is treated when frost or ice have been experienced for an unbroken period of 72 hours or greater (i.e. sub-zero temperatures experienced through the day and night for three continuous days and nights).

Snow Clearance Network. This network comprises strategic routes, roads accessing key facilities and other transport needs and is treated before, and where appropriate ploughed after, snowfall.

Contingency Treatment Network. This network comprises strategic routes, access to key facilities and other transport needs and provides a minimum essential service to the public when there is a national shortage of salt/limited supply of salt and/or a Government directive.

The M4 motorway and A34 trunk road are controlled by Highways England and are treated by Highway England's contractors.

The map overleaf shows the roads that are routinely treated when frost and ice is forecast on the road surface. **It is important to note that treatment does not mean that the treated roads will be ice free** and caution should always be exercised when travelling on the road network during cold and snow conditions.

What you can do to help yourself:

As a road user (motorist, pedestrian or cyclist), you have a responsibility to yourself, your passengers and other road users. Here are some guidelines to assist you in having a safe journey:

Roads may still be icy

No guarantee can be given that roads will always be completely clear of ice and snow even following treatment.

It takes time for salt to become effective after roads are salted.

Rain can wash salt off roads leaving them prone to re-icing.

In severe cold weather with temperatures below -8°C , salt will not be as effective on icy roads.

Whilst every effort is made to salt roads outside rush hour periods, salting during these busy periods will inevitably give rise to some traffic congestion and delay can be expected. Please allow for additional journey time when freezing conditions prevail.

Finally, even the most carefully organised procedures can suffer setbacks or mechanical breakdowns and as a result some salting routes may not be treated as quickly as programmed.

Winter driving

Driving in adverse winter conditions is more difficult if you and your vehicle aren't properly prepared. By following these simple guidelines you will be safer and ready to deal with winter driving problems:

Before starting a Journey, please consider

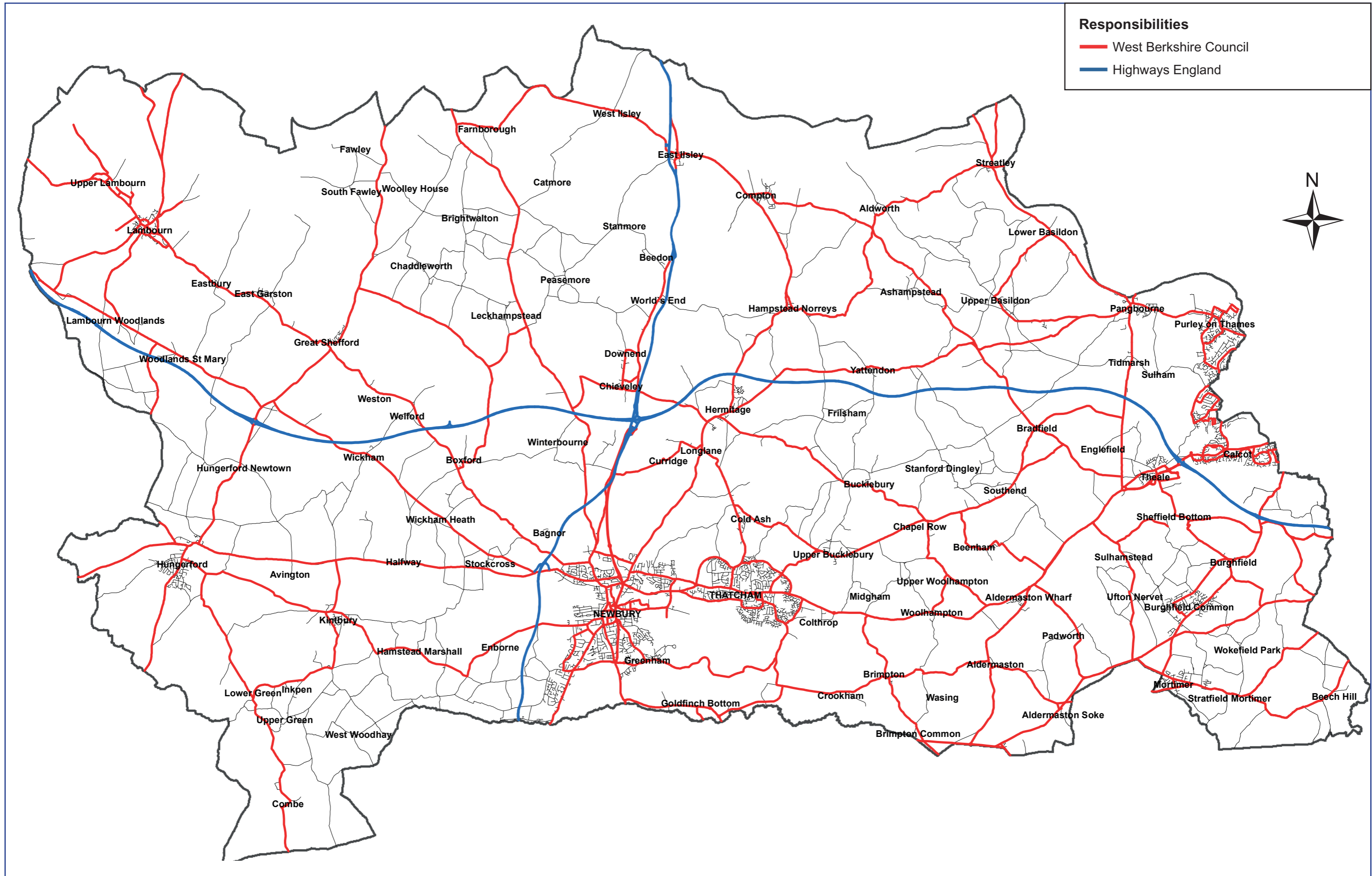
- “Is your journey really necessary and must it be now?” If it is, plan it and give yourself plenty of time. Tell someone your intended route and how long you think it's going to take.
- Is it possible to travel at a different time?
- Check the weather forecast before starting your trip – even if it is a local trip. Listen to the radio for details about road and weather conditions and visit the council's website

- Plan your journey using the Road Primary Treatment Network shown overleaf.
- Allow extra time for the journey and do not rush – it is better to arrive late than never.

Check your vehicle

- Keep your battery fully charged.
- Check tyre treads and pressures.
- Keep the anti-freeze in the radiator and low-freezing screen wash in the washer bottle topped up.
- Keep a can of de-icer and scraper in your vehicle.
- Before starting your journey, clear ice and condensation from the windscreen, side windows and mirrors.
- Check that the windscreen wipers are in good condition and work effectively.
- Ensure that all lights, brake lights and indicators are working properly and the lenses are clean.

Road Primary Treatment Network 2020-2021



Carry the following in your vehicle: warning triangle, hands-free mobile phone kit, warm coat, first aid kit, good torch, travel rug, tow rope, bottled drinking water, recovery service contact number, map, pen and paper.

- Adverse weather and road conditions bring an increased risk of skidding.
- Rain, fog or snow reduces visibility. Use dipped headlights and reduce your speed.
- Keep your speed down and increase your safety gaps when the road is wet or icy.
- Braking, steering, accelerating, decelerating and gear changing should be done gently and gradually.
- Winter sun can be low and dazzling. Use your sun visor.

If you require this information in an alternative format or translation, please call 01635 551111 and ask for Customer Services.

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