



HUMBERSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

# HEALTH, SAFETY & ENVIRONMENT

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## WEATHER CONDITIONS

<b>Owner</b>	<b>Director of Service Improvement</b>
<b>Responsible Person</b>	<b>Head of Health and Safety</b>
<b>Date Written</b>	<b>May 2018</b>
<b>Date of last review</b>	<b>August 2018</b>
<b>Date of next review</b>	<b>August 2021</b>

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Slip and trip accidents tend to increase during the Autumn and Winter seasons for several reasons:

- There is less daylight
- Wet and decaying leaves
- Rain water
- Ice, frost, snow
- Gritting

The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and Workplace Health, Safety and Welfare Regulations 1992 provides duties to employers, employees, subcontractors and other third parties.

The Occupiers Liability Act 1957 places a common duty of care to visitors to premises to be given safe access to property; this responsibility is extended to trespassers by Occupiers Liability Act 1984.

There are effective actions which can be taken to reduce the risk of a slip or trip.

## **2. EQUALITY AND INCLUSION**

HFRS aims to continuously improve the standards of service we provide to the community we serve. We recognise the importance of, and are committed to promoting equality and inclusion in the provision of our services and to our employees. We are committed to encouraging equality and diversity amongst our workforce and to eliminating unlawful discrimination. We aim for our workforce to be truly representative of the community we serve and for each of our employees to feel respected and to be able to give their best.

## **3. LIGHTING**

As autumn and winter closes in the levels of natural light begin to decline.

The reduction in natural light may make hazards less obvious or less likely to be seen.

As part of the Health, Safety and Environment Plans (HSEPs) the plan supervisor for each location must carry out regular inspection of lighting within their area of responsibility (both internal and external sources of artificial lighting).

Any deficiencies found should be recorded and spent lamps should be replaced as soon as is practically possible.

Care must be taken when installing new lamps, events should be risk assessed ensure that personal are not taken any undue risks. If the risk assessments deem it necessary,

then the defect must be reported to Joint Estates Section to arrange for authorised personnel to undertake the works.

#### **4. WET AND DECAYING LEAVES**

Fallen leaves that are either wet or have started to decay can create risks from slips in two ways:

- They can hide a hazard that may be on the path, or
- They can be the hazard themselves

Fallen leaves which are deemed to have the potential to create a risk of slipping or coming into contact with a hidden hazard should be removed thus eliminating the hazard and reducing the risk to as low a level as possible. This will be carried out by Service personnel.

#### **5. RAIN WATER**

Many slip accidents occur at premises entrances as people entering the building walk in rainwater.

Consider installing absorbent mats or changing the entrance flooring in the premises to non-slip material, where matting is provided, ensure that it is in a good state of repair.

Discourage people from taking shortcuts over grass or dirt which are likely to become slippery when wet. Consider converting existing shortcuts into proper paths.

A risk assessment must be carried out and the most reasonably practicable measure should be adopted (taking into consideration the benefits against effort, time, money, inconvenience).

The premises HSEP Manager or Supervisor should liaise with the Health and Safety Section and Joint Estates Service should they feel such controls may be necessary at their work place premises.

#### **6. ICE, FROST AND SNOW**

In order to effectively manage and reduce the risk of slips on ice, frost or snow the risk must be assessed at each individual premises; this would be undertaken by the premises HSEP Supervisor or on duty manager, once this has been assessed controls can be identified and established.

Steps to be taken:

- Identify the area(s) most likely to be used by personnel, contractors, visitors and third parties which are most likely to be affected by ices, *for example*:
  - *building entrances,*
  - *car parks,*
  - *walkways,*
  - *short-cuts,*
  - *sloped areas and*
  - *areas constantly in the shade or wet.*
- Monitor the temperature, as prevention is key.
- Action must be taken whenever freezing temperatures are forecast, keep up to date by:
  - Checking HFRS Service Intranet;
  - Siren and email alerts, detailing weather conditions;
  - Visit:
    - Met Office website
    - BBC Weather website
    - Highways Agency website
- Establish a procedure to prevent an icy surface forming and/or keep personnel, contractors, visitors and third parties off slippery surfaces where possible.
  - Use grit provided by stores, on areas prone to be slippery in frosty, icy conditions;
  - Areas to be included when gritting must include the station/building area (i.e. car parks, drill yards etc.)
  - Where possible, premises boundaries should be gritted
- Divert personnel, visitors, contractors and third parties to less slippery walkways and barrier off if necessary (If warning cones are used, remember to remove them once the hazard has passed or they will eventually be ignored).

These actions should be undertaken by the HSEP Supervisor or on duty manager and can be delegated to other personnel if necessary.

The most reasonably practicable control measure should be identified and implemented.

## 7. GRITTING: THE PROS AND CONS

The most common method used to de-ice floors is gritting as it is relatively cheap, quick to apply and easy to spread. Rock salt (plain and treated) is the most commonly

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used 'grit' and is the substance used by the highways authority and is also provided by the Service.

Salt can stop ice forming and cause existing ice or snow to melt. It is most effective when it is ground down, but this will take much longer on pedestrian walkways than on the roads.

Gritting should be carried out when frost, ice or snow is forecast or when walkways are likely to be damp or wet and the floor temperatures are at, or below freezing. The best times are early in the evening before the frost forms and/or early in the morning before employees arrive.

Salt does not work instantly; it requires sufficient time to dissolve into the moisture on the floor.

Gritting when it is raining heavily will result in the salt being washed away; causing a problem if the rain turns to snow. Compacted snow, which turns to ice, is difficult to treat effectively with grit.

'Dawn frost' can occur on dry surfaces, when early morning dew forms and freezes on impact with the cold surface, this can be difficult to predict.

**If you require further guidance on this document, please contact the  
Health, Safety & Environment Section**