



Department
for Transport

**To Leaders of all
Local Highway Authorities in England,
Outside London**

Minister of State
Jesse Norman MP

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4 December 2018

WINTER 2018/19

I thank the transport sector and local highways authorities for the work they have undertaken in preparation for the coming winter period. It is good to see that many authorities have reviewed and updated their contingency plans to mitigate the effects of any significant weather that we may encounter over the coming winter period.

I want to highlight again the importance of key steps needed in order to ensure that local highways remain open and running in the event of severe weather. It is very important that your authority works closely with your Local Resilience Forum and other key organisations and responders in your area, and that it ensures that effective communications plans are in place for you to inform local residents, businesses and other key organisations as part of your winter service.

As in previous winters, the Department for Transport will play its part to ensure the UK is well prepared for the season. Actions we have undertaken include continuing to maintain a substantial national emergency salt reserve if for any reason it is required.

We will be undertaking regular monitoring of salt stocks being held by highway authorities starting in December. I look forward to your council's cooperation with my officials as and when they request this information, which will be at least monthly. Your council's assistance in this is very important. We need to understand whether there may be any road salt stock issues, so these can be dealt with quickly to minimise disruption on the local highway network.

The UK's salt producers, through the Salt Association, has provided reassurance that salt production nationally is on target as we move towards the 2018/19 winter season.

However, the Department retains a national emergency salt reserve and we are publishing a Salt Protocol Note on the DfT section of gov.uk website. This Note sets out the arrangements for the allocation of the salt reserve, if and when it is required.

Last year, after a long and difficult winter, we saw a number of authorities with reduced salt stocks. Unfortunately this led to a few authorities having to request mutual aid. With this in mind, we have made it clear that we expect authorities to guard against any complacency in managing and maintaining their salt stocks.

It is our view that:

- It is often unrealistic to expect salt producers and hauliers to deliver within 24 hours of an order being made, particularly when the country is entering a severe snow event; and
- Once a highways authority has used a substantial portion of its salt stocks, it should re-order enough to retain at least the 12-day benchmark throughout the winter season.

The Salt Association has issued a message on their website which reinforces this, and I would be grateful if you could ensure your authority takes this message on board - <https://www.saltassociation.co.uk/pre-winter-season-message-salt-association/>

The Department for Transport is also working closely with the Met Office and other Government Departments in respect of the 'Get Ready for Winter' Campaign. As in previous years, this will include promoting the advice the Government produced in 2010 on self-help, known as the Snow Code. The guidance provides advice on clearing snow and ice from pathways and it is recommended that you include a weblink to the Code on your website:

<http://www.metoffice.gov.uk/barometer/get-ready-for-winter>

During recent winters, various parts of the country have encountered severe flooding which has led to damage to local highway infrastructure assets.

It is important that your authority continues, and certainly does not reduce, routine clearing and cleansing of the drains and gullies for which you are responsible. This helps to minimise the risk of surface water flooding. It is also important that you have access to sandbags and water pumps etc. in the event that flooding occurs.

It is for your authority to determine the priority it wishes to give to winter services, and to ensure that plans are in place to deal with extreme weather events, including snow/ice and other storms. I hope you will continue to make this important work a priority, to ensure that transport disruption is minimised for users.

Finally, may I also take the opportunity in advance to thank you and your officers for all the work they do throughout the year to ensure our transport networks are kept up and running—no matter what the weather.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Jesse Norman". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long, sweeping underline.

JESSE NORMAN