

**Local Highway Panels Members' Guide**

**10 Winter Issues**



# 1. Introduction

Essex Highways treats over 2000 miles of roads in Essex, which is about 40% of our road network. These are the most important routes to keep moving and all routes are treatable in a maximum of 3 hours.

The service makes use of accurate weather forecasts, dedicated weather stations and roadside sensors to help us decide when to salt, and how much salt to spread. Salting is often undertaken during early mornings and late evenings to minimise disruption on the network.

Working with local District, Borough, City, Parish and Town councils, the aim is to provide the best possible winter service for our residents and highway users. There is also a network of local farmers who are on standby ready to plough roads if required.



There are a total of 57 salting routes and we operate 62 machines with ploughs plus two mini gritters with around 116 drivers who are deployed based on weather conditions. We use around 200 tonnes of salt on each run.

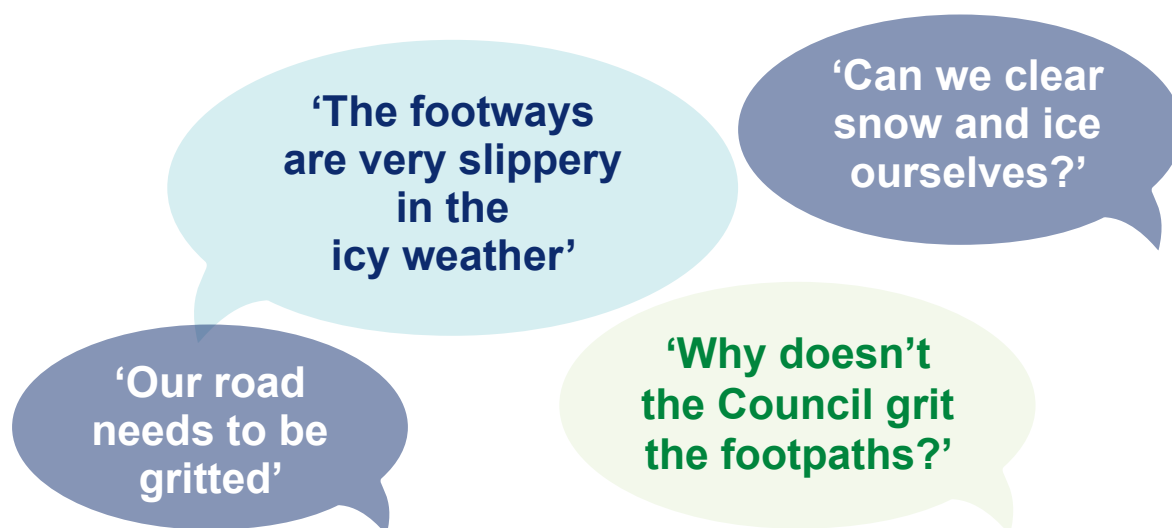
The salting routes consist of:

- 'A' roads for which Essex Highways are responsible. This excludes the A12, the A120 and the A130 which are administered by other organisations.
- 'B' roads.
- The access route to the main settlement of a Parish of 50 or more households not already on the precautionary salting route.
- Roads served by at least 4 public bus services per day for 5 days per week or more.
- Roads that link sites of national importance (e.g. airports, ports, fuel refineries etc.) to the main salting network.
- We also include roads which allow ambulance and fire stations access to the main salting network.

Only when this activity is completed can resources (manpower, equipment and salt) be deployed to other areas.

Further information about the County's Salting Routes can be found on the website: [Salting Routes](#). The Winter Service is managed by Essex Highways Operations Teams and is outside the LHP remit but there are some initiatives that the LHP can promote.

## 2. Typical Problems



## 3. Things to Consider

### Salt Bins

All requests for the installation of **new** salt bins will need to be made via the LHP. The proposed location of a bin will be checked for suitability. The site needs to be located where it is safe to access for stocking/use and must be positioned where it doesn't reduce visibility etc. as per 'conditions' below, and meets the criteria.



ECC will **not** provide bins in the following circumstances:

- In private areas or on commercial premises.
- Within 200 metres of another salt bin.
- Where they would obstruct the passage of pedestrians.
- Where the location would reduce visibility for traffic/pedestrians.
- Where traffic management would be required when installing or stocking.
- Where the location is unsafe for use by the public.
- Where the location is on a treated part of the network.
- Where the road is not on a steep incline.
- Where there is no sharp bend in the road

## 3. Things to Consider continued

### Salt bin misuse and issues

There are a number of considerations which require effective management so that bins are fit for purpose;

- **Stealing of salt** - Some bins are emptied soon after stocking or for re-sale.
- **Private Use** - The salt is for use on the public highway only, however reports are made of the salt being used for private use (i.e. driveways or on private land).
- **Vandalism/Damage** - An on-going maintenance concern.
- **Contamination** - Some bins are used as rubbish bins, the contaminated waste requires emptying and disposal prior to filling.
- **Non-use** - Some bins are not used and require the salt to be chipped out prior to re-stocking as it has solidified over the year.

Should an existing ECC owned bin (within the public highway) prove problematic because of regular misuse of salt for the treatment of private driveways, or vandalism, ECC reserves the right to remove it.

### Clearing snow and ice

Contrary to popular belief, there is no law stopping you from clearing your local pavements and pathways, providing you take a careful and common sense approach. The government publishes guidance on how to [clear snow from a road, pathway or cycleway yourself](#). The Met Office publishes [The Snow Code](#). You could also check guidance on the [Health and Safety Executive](#) website.

### Frequently Asked Questions

The Winter Travel pages on the website provide lots of useful answers to the most [Frequently Asked Questions](#)



## 4. Typical Measures

### Salt bins

Salt bins are provided at various locations throughout the county to allow drivers and pedestrians to treat localised icy conditions. The bins contain a salt/sand mix which is solely for use on public roads and pavements and should not be used for private driveways.

Currently, there are in the region of 1000 salt bins in Essex and each fill of the salt bin network takes approximately 350 man hours, uses up to 1000 tonnes of salt and takes over 3 weeks to complete.



Existing bins are stocked as part of the Essex Highways normal stocking programme and will not be filled on an ad-hoc basis during the winter. Throughout the winter the priority is to ensure the precautionary gritting network is secure. New salt bins that meet the criteria can be provided by the LHP.

To view the locations of our salt bins refer to the [Highways Information Map](#).

If a bin is not shown on this map it could be a privately-owned bin, purchased by a Parish or District Council, Residents Association or member of the public. Privately-owned bins are not stocked by Essex Highways. If an LHP, Parish or District Council, Residents Association or individual member of the public want to purchase their own salt bin and install it on private land (with the landowners agreement) they will then be responsible for maintenance and stocking of the bin.

### Salt Bag Partnership

Essex Highways contact all Parish/Town Clerks by the end of May each year with a link to the online form where they are asked if they still have enough salt from last year, if they require more salt, or if they do not wish to participate for that year. The salt bags will be delivered to the person named on the form prior to the start of the winter season.



Information about the salt bag partnership and how to get involved can be found on the website: [Salt Bag Partnership](#)

## 5. Scheme Investigation

If the proposed bin location meets the criteria then the LHP can fund the installation thereafter Essex Highways will stock and maintain it.

Delivery of the bin will be in line with the forward programme and once installed the bin will be stocked in line with the normal stocking programme, **not** on an ad-hoc basis.

## 6. Costs and timescales

The Essex County Council contract with Ringway Jacobs is a target cost contract and not a fixed price contract. This type of contract was chosen as the best type of contract to deliver savings and efficiencies and also to promote partnering between ECC and Ringway Jacobs.

An explanation of the process can be found in Appendix 1.

The costs and timescales for typical schemes can be found on the following hyperlink. [10 – Winter Issues].



## 7. Glossary of Terms

<b>AVL</b>	Automatic Vehicle Location (similar to RTPI)
<b>CMA</b>	Cabinet Member Action
<b>CMB</b>	Cabinet Member Briefing
<b>EA</b>	Environment Agency
<b>ECC</b>	Essex County Council
<b>EH</b>	Essex Highways
<b>LHP</b>	Local Highways Panel
<b>NEPP</b>	North Essex Parking Partnership
<b>PP</b>	Parking Partnership
<b>RTPI</b>	Real Time Passenger Information
<b>S106</b>	Section 106 (Money provided by a Developer to County Council to implement infrastructure as an obligation of the planning permission)
<b>S278</b>	Section 278 (Infrastructure required to be implemented by the Developer as an obligation of the planning permission)
<b>SERP</b>	Safer Essex Roads Partnership
<b>SID</b>	Speed Indicating Device
<b>SEP</b>	South Essex Parking Partnership
<b>SLO</b>	Speed Limit Order
<b>SSSI</b>	Site of Special Scientific Interest
<b>TRO</b>	Traffic Regulation Order
<b>TSRGD</b>	Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions
<b>VAS</b>	Vehicle Activated Sign