

EMERGENCY Management

Helping You To Help Yourself
Newsletter of the Emergency Planning Service

December 2011

Winter Driving ... on Snow and Ice



Driving on snow and ice can be challenging and has safety and financial consequences for the unwary.

Devon County Council is responsible for over 8,000 miles (12,800 km) of road from major A roads to narrow country lanes. This is the longest network in England.

The British winter is unpredictable. Bad weather can strike suddenly so the best advice when severe weather hits is to stay off the road. If you must drive, remember over 90% of crashes are attributed to human error, so make sure you are prepared and drive for the conditions.

Before undertaking a journey it is necessary to decide if your journey is absolutely essential, with the luxury of hindsight would you still think you were right to try?

Take warm clothes with you, some water or a hot drink, maybe some chocolate, and a charged mobile phone so you can inform friends/family if you become delayed. A blanket and a shovel can be very useful if your car becomes stranded. And carry de-icer and a torch.

It is important to prepare your car properly, to clear all of the windows and also the lights of snow, not forgetting to clear the roof to prevent the snow sliding down the windscreen or blowing off distracting other road users. You must also clear your number plates.

When driving on icy and snowy roads the golden rule is to drive very slowly, ice can be patchy. When using the controls it is important to have a light and delicate touch, driving at the lowest speed and in the highest gear possible. Remember to allow more time for your journey.

It is important to have a safe separation distance from the vehicle in front. The usual advice of the two second is not enough in icy conditions, braking distances can be ten times as much.

Visibility can be seriously reduced and the use of dipped headlights is essential in falling snow.

- Be particularly careful when on hills and making turnings as the tyres may not have enough grip.
- If you do become stuck in snow or on ice then try using a higher gear to move away, this may give you the traction you need.
- If you are still stuck then placing an old blanket under the driving wheels, usually the front, may get you going again.

If you get into trouble:

- Do not use a mobile phone while driving. Stop somewhere safe or ask a passenger to make the call. On a motorway, it is best to use a roadside emergency telephone, because the breakdown and/or



emergency services will be able to locate you easily. If you have to use a mobile phone, make sure you know your location from the numbers on the marker posts on the side of the hard shoulder.

- Abandoned vehicles can hold up rescue vehicles and snowploughs. To ensure that the road is cleared as quickly as possible, stay with your vehicle until help arrives.
- If you have to leave your vehicle to get help, make sure other drivers can see you.

More information can be found at:

http://www.devon.gov.uk/index/transportroads/roads/road_safety/driversandbikers/winterdriving.htm

And

<http://www.highways.gov.uk/knowledge/333.aspx>



National Cold Weather Plan

Your role ...

Every year, mortality rises by 19% in the winter months amounting to an average of 27,000 'excess' deaths or about 1,560 more people per week dying between December and March compared to the rest of the year.

The National Cold Weather Plan was introduced on 2nd November this year and its purpose is to reduce winter deaths by raising public awareness and triggering actions to support vulnerable people who have health, housing or economic circumstances that increases their risk. The plan aims to achieve this by building on established national and local campaigns for winter health with a more coordinated approach. It recommends a series of steps to minimise the health impact of severe weather, to be taken by:

- The NHS, social care and other public agencies.
- Professionals working with people at risk.
- Individuals and communities.

The plan spells out the preparations both individuals and organisations could make to reduce health risks and includes specific measures to protect at-risk groups. It is based on the cold weather alert system.

The plan will work through a system of cold weather alerts linked to the existing winter weather warning system developed by the Met Office which will trigger appropriate actions up to a major incident. The Cold Weather Plan sets out actions at four Cold Weather Alert levels.

The plan outlines the following actions for individuals and communities at each level:

Level 1 - Long Term Planning (includes long-term planning activities that can take place throughout the year).

- Consider what can be done in advance to prepare for cold winter weather, such as insulating their homes and making sure that those at risk are re-

ceiving the benefits they are entitled to.

Level 1 - Winter Preparedness

(Level 1 is in force throughout the winter from 1 November to 31 March)

- Take steps to prepare for winter, such as getting a flu jab if they are in a risk group, insulating their homes and protecting water pipes from freezing, looking out for vulnerable neighbours.

Level 2 - Alert and Readiness

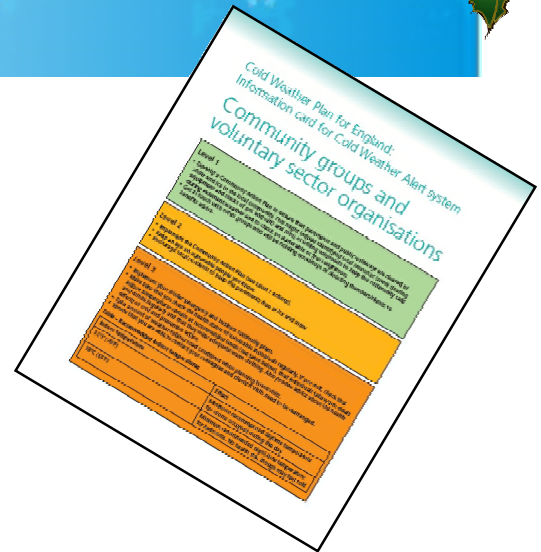
(a Level 2 alert would be issued when a mean temperature of 2^o C is predicted to last more than 48 hours and/or widespread ice and heavy snow is forecast.)

- Stay tuned into the weather forecasts and keep themselves stocked with food and medications, check room temperatures, keep an eye on people at risk.

Level 3 - Severe Weather Action

(when weather described in Level 2 actually happens and is expected to impact on people's health.

- Take immediate action to minimise the harmful effects of the weather, including setting daytime room temperature to 21^o C and bedroom night temperature to at least 18^o C, dressing warmly and eating well and checking on those at risk.



Level 4 - Major Incident

- Many parts of the Country are experiencing exceptionally severe winter weather and the conditions are affecting critical services. Such weather is likely to have significant impacts on health, and infrastructure. A cross-governmental response is required.

The cold weather alerts are issued by the Met Office at:

www.metoffice.gov.uk/weather/uk/coldweatheralert

More information and a useful action cards for individuals & families and community groups and voluntary agencies can be found at :

[www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_130564](http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_130564)

Cold Weather Plan levels	
Level 1	Long-term planning <i>All year</i>
	Winter preparedness programme <i>1 November–31 March</i>
Level 2	Severe winter weather is forecast – Alert and readiness <i>60% risk of severe cold in the following days</i>
Level 3	Response to severe winter weather – Severe weather action
Level 4	Major incident – Emergency response <i>Exceptionally severe weather or threshold temperatures breached for more than six days</i>

Useful Emergency Apps



For those smart phone users the number of applications or 'apps' that can be downloaded is amazing! Here are just a few but it is worth searching your android market or iTunes app store for more....many are free!

Weather application for iPhone

As the UK's national meteorological service, the Met Office provides accurate and reliable weather forecasts on TV and radio, in print, and online. Now, you can get their forecasts wherever you go with the free Met Office iPhone application.

- Up-to-date weather forecasts and warnings
- Easy-to-understand visualisation
- Save and access your favourite locations



ICE Apps

What information is available?

- Five-day forecasts
- National severe weather alerts
- Daily national and regional weather maps
- UK rainfall radar and satellite imagery.

ICE apps or "In Case of Emergency" apps can be life savers. These apps help you to stay safe when things go wrong. What happens if you get knocked unconscious by a car or if you go into cardiac arrest? What if

the worst happens? Will you be prepared? ICE apps can help you when things go wrong by storing vital personal information for first responders such as emergency contact numbers, known allergies and medications you are on, any conditions you have and your personal identification information.



Amongst the many apps are:

- First Aid Emergency Handbook
- St John Ambulance First Aid
- Pocket CPR
- Be Ready

Be Prepared

Prepare an Emergency Pack at Home

- A wind-up or battery powered radio (*with frequencies marked*)
- A wind-up or battery torch
- Spare batteries
- First aid kit
- A copy of home emergency plan and contact list
- Bottled water/canned drinks

Make an evacuation checklist of items to pack quickly if you are suddenly advised to leave your home

- Your emergency pack
- Home and car keys
- Warm clothing
- Toiletries, sanitary supplies, essential medication and personal items eg glasses
- Baby food, nappies
- Wallet, purse and bank cards
- Mobile phone and charger



Keep an emergency pack in the car

- Pet carrier, collar and lead
- Bottled water
- First aid kit
- Torch and batteries
- Cigarette plug lead charger for mobile phone
- Sweets.
- Long life snacks
- Blanket, warm clothing and wool hat
- Waterproof coat
- Wellington boots
- Spare socks
- Gloves

DC4x4R is a group of socially aware 4x4 drivers available and wanting to use their vehicles and driving skills to assist the local community in times of genuine emergency. What its members do can best be summed up in the phrase 'Volunteer Emergency Logistical Support'. At any one time their membership veers between 60 and 80 active members spread through Devon and Cornwall (with the majority of current members residing in Devon).

Members have been called out to assist in missing persons searches by the Police, providing vehicles to drive up and down Haldon Hill to keep the salted roads open overnight, towing stuck motorists off Haldon Hill, taking Police personnel on their rounds in snow

bound and flooded areas, providing 30 vehicles to support the Ten Tors Event (ferrying scrutineers, army personnel, casualties to minibus pick-up points and VIPs to view the event).

In deep snow members have taken District Nurses on their rounds, patients to hospital for vital operations or treatment and social workers to very vulnerable clients.

DC4x4R members have also trained Search and Rescue and Red Cross personnel in safe off road driving techniques – about 60 drivers to date.

Members give no guarantee that they will respond or do anything – but if called upon they will give it their best shot. Members are ready, day and night, 365 days of the year to assist and help. Members

don't charge for their services or time or for the use of vehicles (but fuel usage is usually charged.)

DC4x4R support is usually coordinated by the Police and during the response to a major incident a 4x4 coordination cell is established to ensure requests and tasks can be prioritised and managed effectively.



First point of contact

Did you know your City, District or Borough Emergency Planning Officer is your first point of contact for assistance?

You will find them listed below for reference. Remember they are all there to help you!

Also, the Devon County Council website has lots of useful information for both individuals and communities:

- www.devon.gov.uk
- Safety and Emergencies
- Emergencies

Don't be scared...

The 'Don't be scared, be well prepared' leaflet contains useful emergency planning advice for you and your family.

As winter approaches now may be the the right time to remind residents or to inform new residents.

The leaflet is on the DCC website for download. Copies have also been sent to Parishes for distribution as requested. If your Parish would like more please request them through your District Emergency Planning Officer (See below for contact details).



http://www.devon.gov.uk/emergency_planning.pdf

Mid Devon	East Devon	North Devon	Teignbridge	South Hams/ West Devon	Torridge	Exeter
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