

Clearing snow and ice yourself - new guidance published

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Last winter many people helped keep pavements and public spaces around their homes clear of snow. However, many people were put off doing so because of fears of being sued. Read on for advice on your rights and responsibilities when clearing snow and ice from public areas.

There is no law stopping you from clearing snow and ice on the pavement outside your property, pathways to your property or public spaces. If an accident did happen, it's highly unlikely that you would be sued as long as you:

- are careful
- use common sense to make sure that you don't make the pavement or pathway clearly more dangerous than before
- People using areas affected by snow and ice also have responsibility to be careful themselves.

Tips and advice on clearing snow and ice

- start early - it's much easier to clear fresh, loose snow compared to compacted ice that has been compressed by people walking on it
- don't use hot water - this will melt the snow, but may replace it with black ice, increasing the risk of injury
- be a good neighbour - some people may be unable to clear snow and ice on paths from their property
- if shovelling snow, think where you are going to put it so that it doesn't block people's paths or drainage channels
- make a pathway down the middle of the area to be cleared first, so you have a clear surface to walk on
- spreading some salt on the area you have cleared will help stop ice forming - table salt or dishwasher salt will work, but avoid spreading on plants or grass as they may be damaged by it
- pay particular care and attention to steps and steep gradients
- use the sun to your advantage - removing the top layer of snow will allow the sun to melt any ice beneath; however you will need to cover any ice with salt to stop it refreezing overnight
- if there's no salt available, sand or ash are good alternatives

