



Knowledge

Risk Insight – Access and Egress

January 2016

As the weather gets colder Academies are faced with an increased risk of slips and trips from the formulation of ice and snow on access routes. The unpredictable nature of this risk can make it difficult to manage, but good risk assessment and planning can be effective in controlling this type of hazard.

Legal Requirement

The Occupiers Liability Act requires occupiers to take reasonable care to ensure that visitors will be reasonably safe when on the premises.

The Approved Code of Practice for the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations recommends that organisations should have in place arrangements to minimise risks arising from snow and ice, which may involve gritting and snow clearing of designated routes.

The Management Regulations also require risk assessments to be undertaken.

Guidance

Snow clearance and the gritting of pedestrian routes in icy conditions should be assessed as part of the Academies risk assessment programme. These are some effective actions that can be taken to reduce the risk of a slip or trip during periods of snow and ice:

- Monitor the temperature and weather warnings and put a gritting and snow clearing programme in place when forecasts warn of icy surfaces or snow forming. Be aware that 'dawn frost' can occur and can be difficult to predict. Where this condition can occur your assessment should be based on the premises experience and foreseeability of ice formation.
- Always ensure that regularly used walkways are promptly gritted. e.g. building entrance areas, car parks, main pedestrian walkways, frequented shortcuts, sloped/stepped areas and access routes in the shade or prone to black ice.
- It is preferable to apply grit early in evening before the frost settles and/or early in the morning before employees, pupils or visitors arrive. Grit needs sufficient time to dissolve. If grit is applied when it is raining heavily the salt will be washed away, causing a problem if the rain then turns to snow. Compacted snow, which turns to ice, is difficult to treat effectively and needs to be cleared before applying grit.
- Use salt based grit treatments as this will melt the ice or snow and stop it from refreezing overnight. Sand or ash can also be used to reduce salt use and will provide grip underfoot. Approx., 1 teaspoon of grit will treat 1 square metre of ice.
- Within car parks or large and distant areas provide salt bins to reduce the need to carry grit in icy conditions to these locations.

Further Information

Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992. Approved Code of Practice and guidance (HSE web site)

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