

Weather update and top tips

Thursday 7 January 2010



Weather

Expect snow showers across Suffolk for the rest of the day, with up to 5cms of snow. Tonight ice is likely to be a significant problem. The temperature is unlikely to get above freezing today. More snow showers are forecast up to the weekend, with a particular burst of snow on Sunday. There will be freezing temperatures into next week.

Roads

SCC is continuing to grit Priority One roads in the afternoons and early mornings.

Transport

A query was raised with me yesterday about public transport, and finding out what is running and what isn't. Our public transport team have been asked to encourage operators to keep websites updated with closure information

Helping Suffolk stay safe in bad weather

Members of the Suffolk Resilience Forum, including Suffolk County Council, Suffolk Constabulary, NHS Suffolk, and district and borough councils, are working together once again to ensure the county's residents stay safe during the current adverse weather conditions.

The Forum is issuing a series of key messages and top tips to let people in the county know what's being done to deal with the bad weather and how they can keep safe in the snow and ice.

Suffolk Police's top tips for winter driving include:

During wintry weather conditions:

- Ask yourself – is your journey essential?
- Check the local and national weather forecasts.
- Listen to local and national radio for travel information.
- Tell someone at your destination what time you expect to arrive.
- Adjust your driving to the conditions, as hail, heavy snow and rain reduce visibility.
- Use dipped headlights and reduce your speed.
- Dazzle from winter sun can be dangerous. Keep a pair of sunglasses handy and slow down.

- Make sure you are equipped with warm clothes, food, boots and a torch. In snowy conditions, take a spade.

- Clear your windows and mirrors before you set out and carry a screen scraper and de-icer.

Vehicle condition

- In winter it is even more important to check your vehicle is well maintained and serviced.
- Keep the lights, windows and mirrors clean and free from ice and snow.
- Keep your battery fully charged.
- Add anti-freeze to the radiator and winter additive to the windscreen washer bottles.
- Make sure wipers and lights are in good working order.
- Check that tyres have plenty of tread depth and are maintained at the correct pressure.

Gritting information from Suffolk County Council

- Nearly three weeks of sub zero temperatures in Suffolk has put unprecedented pressure on the winter maintenance team at Suffolk County Council.
- From Wednesday 6th January Suffolk County Council will salt its priority 1 routes, which includes A and B roads in the county and routes to main hospitals and fire stations and routes with more than 4,000 movements a day, but will not salt other roads.
- The priority 1 routes cover almost a third of the county's roads (1232 miles out of 4272 miles of road in the county)
- We will continue to fill grit bins in the county on request from parish councils so local people can treat local trouble spots on minor roads, which otherwise would not be treated.
- Supplies of salt are now being diverted to local authorities in the north whose stocks are completely exhausted. With this in mind we need to make sure we use the salt we have in the most effective and efficient way. We have stocks of salt at present, but we need to be prudent to ensure that we are able to continue to grit the priority routes.
- People need to take care on roads, pavements and in parks – even if places have been gritted, or appear clear of snow, there may still be icy patches.

NHS Suffolk advice for keeping healthy, particularly for older people

- Dress warmly with several light layers of clothing and thermal underwear
- Wear a hat, as a large percentage of the body's heat is lost through the head
- Wear warm, dry, flat, non-slip shoes or boots, especially in icy conditions

- In bed use several light layers
- Move your bed or chairs away from cold exterior walls
- It is a good idea wear bed socks, a night cap, thermal underwear and pyjamas in bed.
- Eat at least one hot meal a day and have regular warm drinks and soup.
- Stock up on essential foods in case of an emergency
- Stay as active as you can

For round the clock healthcare enquiries your first contact should be NHS Direct on 0845 46 47

Look out for vulnerable people

- If you have any concerns at all about an elderly or vulnerable person living nearby, please knock on the door and check they are OK.
- Please check to see if older people can get to the shops and have what they need in the house.
- Encourage people to use their heating, drop in some essential supplies or extra blankets if you can, and make sure that driveways and steps are ice free.
- If you have serious concerns, contact the emergency services.

East of England Ambulance Service urges public to use 999 wisely

- Operational bosses at the East of England Ambulance Service are calling on the public to use common sense and only call 999 for a true emergency need.
- Please use the most appropriate service for your needs. If you have any doubt about whether you need a 999 response please call NHS Direct on 0845 4647 and seek advice. Advice is also available from pharmacies and you can see a doctor without an appointment at the GP led health centres across the region and minor injury units.
- You should call 999 for an ambulance when it is obvious that you or another person is seriously ill and in need of immediate emergency care. Here are some examples of situations when you should call 999:
 - Someone is unconscious
 - Someone is suffering stroke symptoms
 - Someone is bleeding heavily
 - Someone may have broken bones
 - Someone has a deep laceration
 - Someone has chest pain
 - Someone is having difficulty breathing

Take fire safety precautions – advice from Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service

- Portable heaters, open fires and candles can be dangerous, so please take care when using them.
- Keep space heaters and candles away from curtains and other material that could catch light easily, and never leave them unattended.
- Keep lighters and matches away from children. Store these securely when not in use.
- If you have an open fire, protect your home from sparks by using a fire screen.
- Burn only seasoned wood, and don't burn rubbish. Add wood carefully; sparks can escape into the room while the screen is open.

School closures – information from Suffolk County Council

When bad weather or other emergencies force schools to close, headteachers are encouraged to make an early decision, and inform Suffolk County Council. This means that websites and the media can be updated as quickly as possible so that parents and carers know what's happening.

School closures on the Suffolk County Council website:

<http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/EducationAndLearning/Schools/SchoolClosures>

Radio station frequencies

Local radio stations will also broadcast school closure messages. For details of all Suffolk schools:

- [BBC Radio Suffolk](#) - 95.5 / 95.9 / 103.9 / 104.6 FM
- [Gold](#) - 1170 / 1251 AM
- [Heart Ipswich](#) - (formerly SGR FM) 97.1 / 96.4 FM

For details of schools in specific areas in Suffolk:

- [Heart](#) (north Suffolk and Norfolk) - 102.4 FM
- [The Beach](#) (Waveney area) - 103.4 / 97.4 FM
- [Dream 100](#) (north Essex and south Suffolk) - 100.2 FM
- [Kiss 105-108](#) (central Suffolk) - 106.4 FM
- [Heart Cambridge](#) (Newmarket, Haverhill and Mildenhall) - 103 / 97.4 FM
- [Town 102](#) (Ipswich) - 102 FM

- It is the responsibility of the Headteacher to decide if their school should close. Pupil and staff safety is a key factor in making the decision.
- As well as identifying if conditions to get to school are safe the headteacher also considers the weather conditions for the rest of the day to ensure journeys home can be completed safely and in a reasonable timescale. This also includes checking to make sure the necessary transport arrangements can be fulfilled.
- School specific factors such as heating and power also form an important part of the schools decision making process.

Refuse collections – advice from borough and district councils

During the bad weather, bin collections may be disrupted, as vehicles are not able to get round.

For advice on what to do in your area, look at your local borough or district council website:

www.babergh.gov.uk

www.forest-heath.gov.uk

www.ipswich.gov.uk

www.midsuffolk.gov.uk

www.stedmundsbury.gov.uk

www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk

www.waveney.gov.uk

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About the Suffolk Resilience Forum

The Suffolk Resilience Forum plans and organises a multi-agency response to a major incident in the county. The membership of the Forum is currently:

- East of England Ambulance Trust;
- Suffolk Constabulary;
- Suffolk County Council;
- Suffolk Fire & Rescue Service;
- Maritime & Coastguard Agency;
- Suffolk District & Borough Councils;
- Health Protection Agency;
- Suffolk Primary Care Trusts;
- Joint Regional Military Liaison Officer;
- GO-East;
- Environment Agency, and
- Suffolk Joint Emergency Planning Unit.

www.suffolkresilience.com