

Title: Winter Maintenance

PCoP: G:13

Date: October 2020

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First Issue Date: October 1999
 Re-Issue Dates: 10/02, 08/06,
 09/08, 06/11, 07/11, 07/14, 08/17,
 10/20
 Revision No: 8
 Last Reviewed: Oct 2020
 Next Review Due: Oct 2023
 Reviewer: Darrell Redford

PLACE HEALTH AND SAFETY MANUAL

1. Introduction

Winter Maintenance consists of precautionary salting of carriageways and footways, snow ploughing of carriageways and clearing of snow from footways and carriageways. These operations will normally be carried out by The Highways Works Term Contractor but in extreme conditions snow ploughing and clearing may be carried out by other contractors.

2. Scope

This Code of Practice is intended for County Council staff to ensure their own safety and also for them to provide guidance to contractors, other than the Term Contractor, who are engaged on winter maintenance operations. The Highways Works Term Contractor operations are covered by their own Systems of Work.

3. County Council Staff

a) *Pre-Season Rally*

Staff must wear appropriate PPE, as specified in CPA5. Access to vehicles must only be made by means of vehicle mounted steps. Staff should not expose themselves to risks of injury from salt discharge equipment. Staff should ensure they carry out any necessary inspections in locations where there are no moving vehicles.

b) *Scouting*

Staff will sometimes carry out inspections to determine the state of carriageways and/or footways. Scouting should be carried out in a vehicle suitable for the prevailing weather conditions and fitted with a double amber flashing beacon. In severe weather conditions Local Teams will hire in 4-wheel drive vehicles for use by competent staff. Before setting out they should carry out a dynamic risk assessment and check that they have sufficient fuel, additional warm clothing, torch and methods of communication suitable for the location they intend to visit. Mobile phones should be fully charged. They should agree an outline of the route they intend to take with a nominated contact in the office. The Lone Worker protocol shall be operated and regular contact must be maintained with this nominated contact to inform them of conditions and also their whereabouts. Mobile phones should not be used when driving; safe stopping places should be found. If it is necessary to leave the vehicle a mobile phone should be carried

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c) *Weather Station Maintenance*

LCC staff will carry out frontline maintenance of weather stations in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations. Before setting out they should check that they have sufficient fuel, additional warm clothing, torch and methods of communication suitable for the location they intend to visit. Mobile phones should be fully charged. No frontline maintenance will be carried out in severe weather conditions. The Lone Worker protocol shall be operated and reference should be made to CPA6; Short Duration Stops on Public Roads.

4. Other Contractors

Other contractors who agree to assist in snow clearing and ploughing should be given a copy of Appendix CPE12A – Snow Clearing and Ploughing, Guidance for Contractors.

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APPENDIX CPE12A

SNOW CLEARING & PLOUGHING

GUIDANCE FOR CONTRACTORS

1) Introduction

Contractors should be aware of their obligations to themselves, their staff and members of the public under Health and Safety Legislation. This Appendix is intended to give guidance on the specific risks they need to consider when carrying out snow clearing and ploughing, but it is of a general nature and it is important that any uncertainty or situations not covered are brought to the attention of the Network Resilience Staff.

2. Plant and Equipment

Any plant and equipment used on behalf of the County Council must be maintained in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. All personnel using it must have received sufficient training and instructions so as to operate the equipment in a safe and competent manner. All equipment shall conform to the requirements of The Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998. All equipment shall have roll over protection provided. Sufficient fuel and oil shall be available to keep the equipment operating at all times while employed on snow clearing/ploughing. Where it is necessary to refuel any equipment this shall be carried out in accordance with the manufacturers operating instructions. No smoking shall be permitted when refuelling is being undertaken. Wherever possible, proprietary refuelling equipment shall be used to carry out this operation. Drums of fuel should not be left at the side of a road for use later in the day. This may cause an accident or may increase any possible damage if hit by a vehicle.

All lights provided on the equipment shall be in working order. A double amber flashing beacon shall be provided as a minimum. The beacon shall conform to the requirements of Road Vehicles Lighting Regulations 1989. It shall be operated at all times while engaged on snow clearing operations (this includes travelling with the blade).

3. Solo Working

Much of the work of snow clearing/ploughing will generally only involve a driver and a machine. It is important that in these circumstances that the drivers location and route are known to both the Network Resilience staff or representative and to the employees employer or if a lone operator then his family. Drivers or their employers should advise the Network Resilience staff

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of the progress made at regularly agreed timed intervals. Routes should be followed and any deviations, for whatever reason, shall be notified to both the Network Resilience staff or representative and the employer/family. This is necessary so that if the driver gets into difficulties then the emergency services can be directed to the correct location.

Drivers should take care when visibility is reduced by snow blizzards or freezing fog. If they consider that it is unsafe to continue operating they should find somewhere safe to pull in and wait until conditions improve. They should inform the Network Resilience staff or representative of this.

Drivers are expected to have with them a two way radio or a mobile phone. If calling the emergency services on a mobile phone remember you will need to advise the operator what part of the country you are phoning from as well as the exact location of the incident. If a mobile phone is used then it should be capable of being kept charged at all times during the working day.

Drivers should be aware of any “dead areas” where such equipment may not fully operate correctly and should make appropriate arrangements to contact their base before and after entering and exiting such areas. In such areas drivers should make a note of any houses or public phone boxes which may be used to call for assistance if required.

4. Personal Protective Equipment

Drivers should be provided with such equipment as is necessary to protect them from the effects of inclement weather conditions, if they have to leave their cabs or the vehicle breaks down. It is suggested that the following items are the minimum which each driver should carry with them, namely:-

- Footwear, these may be waterproof boots or wellingtons, which should have thermal insoles and suitable socks;
- Waterproof and windproof over trousers;
- Suitable coat should be waterproof and windproof;
- Suitable protection for the head, such as a hat, cap or Balaclava;
- Torch or hand lamp and spare batteries;
- Fire extinguisher;
- Spade;
- Hi-visibility jacket.
- Hot drinks

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Protective clothing should be worn at all times when leaving the vehicle. Air temperatures outside the cab will vary significantly from those inside. Modern machines fitted with heaters etc can give a false sense of security. The presence of wind even at low speeds can significantly reduce the air temperature on exposed skin; this is commonly known as the “wind chill factor”.

If drivers/operators are required to work at any distance from their base then it may be prudent to provide blankets or sleeping bags. This will ensure that if weather conditions deteriorate then the driver/operator will have sufficient protection until the emergency services can get to them.

Drivers/operators should carry with them sufficient food and warm drinks for the duration of the working day. Additional food and warm drinks should be provided in case of an emergency occurring.

5. Weather Conditions

The County Council receives weather forecasts from a Forecast organisation on a regular basis. Network Resilience staff or representative will inform any contractors working for them of the likely weather conditions that can be expected during the forthcoming day. Any changes to this information will be advised to contractors as soon as it becomes available.

Drivers need to watch for changes in the weather conditions. Weather forecasts given by the Forecast organisation are of a more general nature, it is important to realise that the local conditions may vary from those expected. When prevailing weather conditions are significantly different from those expected then the driver/operator should abandon the clearing/ploughing operation and return to their base or a safe place.

The driver/operator should advise the Network Resilience staff, representative or their employer of their decision to abandon the clearing/ploughing at the earliest possible opportunity. Employers should advise the Network Resilience Manager or controlling staff of the actions of their employees. Drivers/operators should not place themselves at risk of being trapped in their vehicles.

Weather forecasts provided by the County Council should not be communicated to any third party except with the express permission of the Network Resilience Manager or their staff.

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6. First Aid

All vehicles should be provided with a travelling first aid kit which should be fully stocked before beginning any work on behalf of the County Council. If the Driver is trained in first aid they could assist any persons in need of first aid of a minor nature. They should request assistance from the emergency services if persons cannot be helped relatively quickly. If a driver or passenger/s of a vehicle are found trapped in their vehicle, do not attempt to remove them unless they are in immediate danger. Trying to move them may cause permanent damage. Try to keep them warm and call the emergency services immediately. They should not on any account, put themselves or their machines at risk.

Driver/operators should be aware of the symptoms of hypothermia. Hypothermia can develop without the person themselves being aware of their deteriorating condition. The symptoms associated with hypothermia are:-

Shivering

Cold, pale, dry skin; the body feels “as cold as marble”,

Apathy, confusion or irrational behaviour; occasionally belligerence,

Lethargy,

Failing consciousness,

Slow and shallow breathing,

A slow and weakening pulse,

And, in extreme cases, cardiac arrest.

Drivers/operators who suspect that they or a member of the public is beginning to suffer from hypothermia should contact the emergency services as soon as possible. In the mean time the first priority must be to prevent the person losing more body heat and try to reheat the body slowly.

7. Assistance to Third Parties and Abandoned Vehicles

If during the clearing/ploughing operations, third parties are encountered who require assistance, this should be given only where the clearing/ploughing operations will not be adversely affected. If necessary, call for assistance from the emergency services. Drivers/operators should not place themselves or their machines at risk by assisting third parties.

Abandoned vehicles should not be moved. If an abandoned vehicle obstructs

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or completely blocks the highway then you should advise the Network Resilience Manager or controlling staff of the situation and request guidance on what action to take. On no account should individuals attempt to move abandoned vehicles. Abandoned vehicles may only be moved by their owners or specialist contractors having the necessary insurance cover.

8. Traffic Calming Measures/Speed Humps

Network Resilience in liaison with Local Teams will inform any contractors working for them of any Traffic Calming Measures or Speed Humps which could cause a danger to the snow clearance operation.

9. Further Advice

If you are unclear about any advice contained in this Code of Practice please contact the Network Resilience Office.

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