Snow Busters FAQs

Frequently asked questions about the Snow Busters programme.

1. What is Snow Busters?

Over the winter months, heavy snowfall can cause challenges for some of our residents from young parents with children in pushchairs to the elderly and everyone in between. Those with illnesses, disabilities or have mobility issues. The Snow busters programme is a snow clearance scheme using volunteers within the local community. The programme aims to build community resilience during bad weather and periods of heavy snow.

2. Can anyone be a part of Snow Busters?

Yes as long as you are fit and able. Clearing snow is hard work and we need volunteers who can undertake snow and ice clearance activities in poor weather conditions. If you have a heart condition, or you are in poor health, let someone else volunteer to be a part of the Snow Busters programme and do the hard work for you.

3. Will I be held liable if someone falls on a path I have cleared?

There is no law preventing you from clearing snow and ice on the pavement outside your property, pathways to your property or public spaces. It is very unlikely that you would face any legal liability, as long as you are careful, and use common sense to ensure that you do not make the pavement or pathway clearly more dangerous than before. People using areas affected by snow and ice have responsibility to be careful themselves. Under common law a volunteer can only be considered negligent if they deliberately went out to create a hazard. You should therefore not do anything that makes an area unsafe for others. For more information see the Government website [here](#).

4. Should I clear snow from the road?

The Snow Busters programme is **not** for the clearance of public roads. The Dudley Council gritting team, work around the clock to keep more than 480 kilometres of road clear during severe weather. In addition there are more than 1,090 grit bins, located across the borough, for people to use on the carriageways and footways as and when needed.

5. Are snow shovels provided by the Council?

Yes. The Council will provide a snow shovel, a hi-vis vest, a salt spreader, salt, a Volunteer Briefing Sheet, Snow Clearing Guidance and Manual Handling Guidance.

6. Will I be paid for taking part in Snow Busters?
No. There is no payment for being part of the Snow Busters programme, but you will know that you have made a positive difference in the lives of your neighbours.

7. Why is snow removal so important?

Snow that remains on public pathways is hazardous for everyone particularly the elderly and people with mobility issues; and the helpers and service providers that need to visit them.

8. What tips do you have for clearing snow and ice?

- Start early: it is much easier to remove fresh, loose snow compared to compacted ice that has been compressed by people walking on it
- Do not use hot water. This will melt the snow, but may replace it with black ice, increasing the risk of injury
- If shovelling snow, consider where you are going to put it, so that it does not block people’s paths, or block drainage channels. This could shift the problem elsewhere
- Make a pathway down the middle of the area to be cleared first, so you have a clear surface to walk on. Then you can shovel the snow from the centre to the sides
- Spreading some salt on the area you have cleared will help to prevent any ice forming, but avoid spreading on plants or grass as they may be damaged by it. A tablespoon for each square metre you clear should be sufficient.

9. Do Snow Busters pick up medication or groceries for residents in need during major snowfall events?

No. Snow Busters do not pick-up or deliver medications or groceries as many of the larger pharmacies and supermarkets have this type of service in place. Snow Busters will deal with public path clearance only.

10. I am an elderly person/disabled person. Will the Snow Busters clear snow from my path?

There is no guarantee this will happen but it is certainly the intention of the programme.

11. My Council Tax is not issued by Dudley, am I eligible?

No. Why not approach your own council to see if they have a similar scheme.
12. Who should I contact for more information or to request a snow pack?

Please call the Winter Warmth Team on 01384 817086 or email winterwarmth@dudley.gov.uk