



# **Volunteer Snow Warden Scheme - Training**

September 2020

## Introduction

This document provides the training which is required to be undertaken by all Snow Warden Scheme volunteers. Reading and understanding this document will provide the training required to participate in the Volunteer Snow Warden Scheme. This training consists of guidance on snow clearing techniques which minimise the stress and strain on the body during snow clearing activities as well as best practice for snow clearing and treatment. In addition, the Snow Code is detailed which outlines the behaviours expected of volunteers to enable them to be covered by Aberdeenshire Council's Public Liability Insurance or the Public Liability Insurance for the constituted group to which they belong.

## Covid – 19 Key Measures

Due to the current outbreak of Covid-19 please take the following precautions to reduce the risk of transmission of the virus during snow warden activities.

- **Good Hygiene:** Hand washing with soap and water, sanitiser, catching coughs and sneezes with a tissue.
- **Physical Distancing:** Maintaining 2 metre distance from other people.
- **Cleaning:** Disinfect tools such as shovels before and after use.
- **Isolate:** If you have symptoms or asked to do so by Test & Protect. If you do have symptoms, stay at home and book a test. Further guidance below on isolation from NHS Inform website.

<https://www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/infections-and-poisoning/coronavirus-covid-19/test-and-protect/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-infection>

## Snow Clearing Technique

For those with access to the internet, there are several videos demonstrating suitable snow shovelling techniques. Examples of these can be found at the following links:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ToZt8MCtavg>

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lp\\_Rwbp8S1k](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lp_Rwbp8S1k)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9h2hKhLFf4c>

In addition to the above and for those without access to the internet, the following guidance on how to shovel snow is provided:

1. Warm up first, your muscles need a chance to warm up for the physical exertion which shovelling places on them. Cold, tight muscles are more prone to injury than warmed up, flexible muscles. Pace yourself and slowly build up your speed of shovelling over the first 5 minutes. Stretch out any stiff or aching muscles after you have warmed up properly.

2. Move snow short distances, remove small amounts of snow frequently as opposed to removing large piles all at once. A good strategy to minimise the amount of snow pushed is to begin by clearing the perimeter of the area being shovelled first. Then begin shovelling from the middle of that area towards the edges.
3. Use proper snow shovelling techniques.
  - Use your leg muscles as much as possible – push snow when you can and use your legs to lift when you can't push it.
  - Bend at the hips, not the low back, and push the chest out, pointing forward. Then, bend your knees and lift with your leg muscles, keeping your back straight.
  - Keep your loads light by taking multiple smaller scoops when lifting snow.
  - If you must lift a shovel full, grip the shovel with one hand as close to the blade as comfortably as possible and the other hand on the handle (Handle and arm length will vary the technique).
  - Avoid twisting the back to move your object to its new location – always pivot your whole body to face the new direction
  - Keep the heaviest part of the object close to your body at your centre of gravity – do not extend your arms to throw the snow.
  - Walk to the new location to deposit the snow rather than reaching or tossing.
  - If you are “pushing” snow, hold your shovel at a slight angle and begin making passes back and forth width-wise along your driveway. You should rarely need to move your shovel above waist height.
4. Cover up but don't overdress, you need to stay warm, but if you overdress you're going to be soaked in sweat in no time. Wear loose-fitting layers that you can peel off as you heat up. Wear shoes or boots with good treads to minimise the risk of slipping.

## Snow Clearing and Treatment:



Snow can either be shovelled away from walkways or in the case of fresh snow, pushed.



Once the snow has been cleared, lightly spread grit evenly over the area.



Take care not to create wasteful and ineffective grit mounds that reduce the number of other footways that can be treated.



The grit will provide good grip underfoot.

To make sure you clear pathways safely and effectively:

- Clear snow early in the day - it's easier to move fresh, loose snow,
- Don't use water - it might refreeze and turn to black ice,
- Use salt if possible - it will melt the ice / snow and stop it from refreezing,
- If you don't have salt, use sand which provides grip underfoot,
- To prevent slips pay extra attention when clearing steps and steep pathways,
- When you're shovelling snow, take care where you put it so that it doesn't block people's paths, drains or driveways. Make sure you make a path down the middle of the area to be cleared first so that you have a clear surface to walk on. Then shovel the snow from the centre of the path to the sides ensuring any drop kerb crossing points are kept clear.

Remember, people walking on snow and ice have a responsibility to take reasonable care of their own safety. Don't be put off clearing a path because you're afraid someone might be injured after you have carried out work on it.

You will not be held responsible if someone is injured on a path or pavement if you've cleared it carefully and in accordance with the training you have been given and the advice contained in this Code.