



Norfolk County Council-Supamix

Who?

Norfolk County Council Highways Winter Service, who treat 3,500 km of highway across Norfolk including Norwich City. As part of its Winter Services Operational Plan it also treats traffic-restricted pedestrian areas in Norwich. Many of these pedestrianised streets are old, narrow historic lanes which are not suitable for passage by vehicles including gritters.

The challenge:

Norfolk was looking for a de-icer that it could use on all footways in the core city-centre area of Norwich to help protect the public from ice and snow during winter events. Previously it had used a product that was very effective but wasn't suitable to be used near shops as it was being trodden inside, staining carpets and shop floors. The council also wanted a product that was suitable for use on the top open deck of the city's multi-storey car parks as well as pedestrian bridges, which are constructed from metal and therefore prone to corrosion by traditional salt treatments.

"We wanted to ensure we had something that first and foremost was effective and safe especially in an area where there is a high concentration of people a lot of the time. In a city centre, safety of the people visiting is paramount" says Alex Cliff, Highway Network and Digital Innovation Manager, Norfolk County Council.

The solution:

After searching the market, Norfolk opted for Safecote's Supamix de-icer. The Supamix de-icing and anti-icing liquid is a 'high-performance' treatment specifically designed to tackle any surface type. It is three times more powerful than salt and is non-hazardous ideal for both preventative or reactive applications. It breaks down compacted snow and ice-build up instantly. With a working temperature of below -20C it is 60% less corrosive than standard de-icing salt and can be applied using liquid spray equipment from knapsacks and small vehicle spreaders, to large liquid/combi spreading vehicles.

"We have been using the product for a number of years now and it has been very effective for us," adds Mr Cliff.

The winter services team responsible for the treatment in the city centre usually put down the product in the evenings on days when freezing conditions are expected. "Once we check the forecast we look to treat during the evening before at the optimum time when the footways are clear of pedestrians" says Mr Cliff. Supamix is applied in this case, using a small off-road utility vehicle with a tank mounted on the back and a 1.2m wide spray bar. This way the liquid de-icer can be delivered at a consistent speed ensuring the minimum dosage is applied, in-line with the council's winter decision making policy. Like all highway works, Norfolk has adopted the risk-based approach when considering its strategy on footways in the area, in-line with the Well Managed Highway Infrastructure Code of Practice.

"We find Supamix works extremely well in highly-concentrated areas where gritters or similar vehicles cannot otherwise get to safely," says Mr Cliff.

New guidance on treating footways and cycleways in winter, due to be released soon, will provide local authorities with more detailed up-to-date information on the type of de-icers and equipment needed to deliver an effective maintenance programme, as well as the benefits of treatment and case studies on route selection and treatment methods.

It is expected to say that route selection should be based on the Well-Managed Highways Infrastructure Code of Practice's risk-based approach. It will also offer the councils factors to consider when choosing the right treatment options and methodology. The Well-Managed Highway Infrastructure Code of Practice also recommends that local authorities identify a minimum winter resilience network for each of their respected areas, to include 'essential' footways and cycleways as part of this.