



Preparing for Winter in Midlothian

Getting ready for winter is something we all need to do – it only takes a few simple steps. It's time to start thinking about how you could be affected by severe weather, and what you need to do now to be better prepared.

Whether it's at home, in the community or behind the wheel, we all need to consider what might help. By thinking about how we can all be ready, we can help Midlothian be better prepared.

Previous Years severe weather caught many people out.

This special newsletter contains some good advice and tips to prepare us for this winter. Some useful phone numbers are included. As part of 'My Winter Plan', write down your important contact numbers now and keep them by your phone. We have included many sources of support. Please take time to read through them and make sure you have thought about the things that will make this winter manageable, safe and enjoyable!

Make sure you will be able to have your footpaths and driveway cleared if severe weather strikes. It is a good idea to keep a shovel (specially designed snow shovels are particularly good) and some salt or grit at home. Remember to find out where your nearest local authority grit bin is located. Information about local services is kept up-to-date on Midlothian Council's website (www.midlothian.gov.uk), so it's important to check for the latest information and advice during severe weather. Stay tuned to local radio stations such as Black Diamond and Forth FM as they also provide advice and updates during bad weather.

Here are some recommended items to keep in your car over

winter:

- ☺ **A blanket;**
- ☺ **Warm winter clothing (including boots);**
- ☺ **Ice scraper and de-icer;**
- ☺ **Battery jump leads;**
- ☺ **A map for any unplanned diversions;**
- ☺ **A first-aid kit;**
- ☺ **A torch and spare batteries;**
- ☺ **A mobile phone and charger;**
- ☺ **A shovel for snow; Food and drink that will last (and a warm drink in a flask before each journey).**

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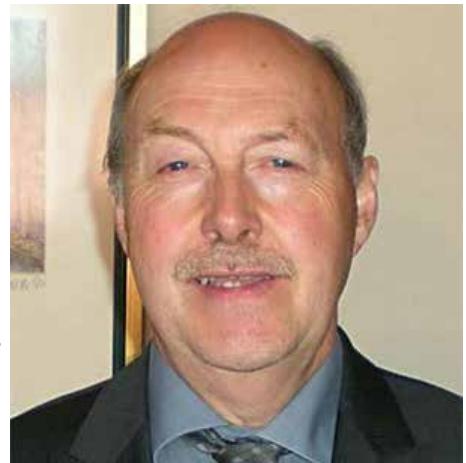
A message from Midlothian Council

In this Newsletter, readers will find plenty of information about how to keep safe and well this winter. Our spread includes top tips about what to do in severe weather as well as information on how to cope if snow does come. For more information visit www.midlothian.gov.uk/severe-weather Our council teams are ready up for whatever the season throws at us.

Midlothian Council gritting teams will be out round the clock as required, our land and countryside services staff members are all on hand to tackle fallen branches if needed and there's more than 5,000 tons of grit in stock.

Councillor Derek Rosie the cabinet member with responsibility for roads, said: "The weather can change extremely quickly and it's good to know we are prepared to cope whatever happens. "As usual, if we do get heavy snow, we are relying on residents who are able to do their bit by clearing pavements outside their homes.

"If local people could also check on vulnerable neighbours that is a huge help." The focus for the council is to keep priority roads - such as bus routes and those near hospitals and schools- open throughout winter.



There are more than 430 grit bins placed throughout the area for general use. Please use the grit for footpaths and roads rather than private driveways.

Midlothian Council are also reminding people to If the weather does force us to close a school, nursery or public building then we will tell residents as soon as possible to allow you to plan ahead.

For more information visit www.midlothian.gov.uk/severe-weather or follow us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/MidlothianCouncil and Twitter at twitter.com/midgov . Or to find out more about our gritting routes visit www.midlothian.gov.uk/gritting

Preparing for Winter

Getting ready for winter at home is easy. Just make a household plan and collect together the items for an emergency kit that may be essential for you and your family.

It is time to think about winter-proofing your home. Do you know what action to take if a water pipe bursts? Do you know where your stop valve is and how to turn it off? Do you know how to turn your electricity supply off at the mains?

If cold weather is forecast, and during a cold snap, keep your heating on at a low temperature to help prevent pipes from freezing.



Making your home energy efficient will make it cheaper and quicker to heat during cold weather. For further information, please call the Scottish Government's Home Energy Scotland Helpline on 0800 512 012.

Remember to check the terms of your household insurance policies to find out what cover you

have for risks such as flood or storm damage or for the costs of temporary accommodation if your home is not habitable. Consider taking out insurance if you don't currently have any.

It is also important to not only prepare your home, but to prepare your body for winter! Preventative measures can be taken to avoid colds and flu. People aged over 65 years or those who have a medical condition can check with their local medical practice to get advice on a seasonal flu vaccination.

Keep a supply of remedies at home. Paracetamol, ibuprofen or aspirin all help to reduce raised temperatures and relieve the aches and pains associated with coughs, colds and flu. Many cold and flu remedies already contain paracetamol, ibuprofen or aspirin. Using several products together can be very dangerous and can lead to an overdose. Products are labelled to indicate their contents, so always check before using them. If you do have a cough, cold or flu, drink plenty of water or other non-alcoholic liquids to replace the fluids lost after sweating. Keep warm and rest as much as you can.

It is best to periodically check that the medicines in your home are up-to-date. This is why it is important to keep them in their original containers. Always follow the instructions on the box or label. If you are unsure about taking any medicines, consult with your doctor or pharmacist first. To combat the cold, layers of thin clothing are far more effective than one thick layer. Choose clothes made of wool, cotton or fleecy synthetic fibres. Remember to wear a hat when outdoors and ensure you wear footwear with a good grip.

During the holiday season, most GP practices will be closed on the 25th and 26th December and 1st and 2nd January.

Most pharmacies will also be closed during the holidays. Please refer to the NHS24 website, www.nhs24.com/findlocal/ for opening times.

Remember to order and collect any repeat prescriptions you may require in sufficient time prior to the holidays. Hospital Accident and Emergency services (A&E) are for emergency and urgent situations only. A&E is not an alternative to G.P.s. Please don't go to A&E if your doctor can't see you immediately or when your surgery is closed.

Winter in the Community

Some family members or neighbours may need extra help during bad weather. Have their phone numbers to hand, and offer to help with grocery shopping or other essential tasks.

If you feel alone during a patch of bad weather, equip yourself with a few useful contact numbers; a neighbour who can help, the local minister, or your local community council.

Clearing ice or snow from your pathway reduces the risk of falling or slipping. Remember - for some people ice can make things as difficult as deep snow.

Your community can get ready for winter by agreeing what you and your neighbours can do on your own or collectively to minimise the effects of winter weather.

Midlothian Council will do all they can to keep essential services running during periods of severe weather. However, severe weather may cause some changes to routine local services such as the temporary closure of schools, changes to the times of refuse collection and a greater emphasis on gritting and route clearance.



Keeping Midlothian moving

If there's heavy snow, police have powers to remove vehicles parked on bus routes.

"No parking" cones will be placed along specific lengths on the streets but only when prolonged and heavy snow is forecast.

A temporary one way system may also operate, if required, around the upper estates at Mayfield and around the Birkenside loop at Gorebridge.

In addition, Lothian Bus can contact us immediately to have a car moved or a bus route gritted.

For maps of routes affected visit see below or www.midlothian.gov.uk/info/200270/severe_weather/287/winter_on_midlothian_roads/3



The streets affected so far by the traffic regulations are:

Dalkeith:

Woodburn Park: Outside numbers 1,3,5,7. Also 35,37,39,41.

Salters' Road: Outside numbers 17,19,21.

Woodburn Road: Outside Numbers 24,26,28, 30,32. Also 64,66,68

James Lean Avenue: Outside Numbers 1,3,5,7. Also 33,35,37,39. Also 45,47. Also 75,77,79,81.

Woodburn Avenue: Outside Numbers 1,3,5.

Eskbank Road: Outside the Kings Park

Loanhead:

Fountain Place: West side of Fountain place from No. 1 to No. 27

Gorebridge:

Powdermill Brae: Top bus stop on Powdermill brae Outside 47, 49 and bus entrance to Birkenside.

Bonnyrigg:

Polton Road West: Opposite entrance to Cameron Crescent and Gordon Avenue, Also Outside Number 66,64,62,60.

Lothian Street: Both sides between Bonnyrigg High street Traffic control and Waverley Crescent.

Dundas Street: Both sides between Bonnyrigg High street Traffic control and Cockpen Road Roundabout.

Polton Avenue Road: Opposite entrance to Polton Hall Sports complex, Outside Numbers 6A,6B, 6C, 6D. Also 20,21,22,23. Outside Hawthornden Primary School, Opposite entrance to Argyll Place.

Rosewell:

Carnethie Street: Outside Numbers 49, 51, 53. Also 73,77,79. Also 103,105,107. Also 137,19,141 also in the bus terminus in Rosewell.

Police will have powers to remove vehicles parked on the coned areas.

Clearing Paths and Driveways after Snow

Be a good neighbour and clear paths of ice and snow during cold weather if you are able to do so. A helping hand with this can make all the difference for people who may be unable to clear their own paths or who need to use local paths to access services.

- * It's much easier to clear fresh snow;
- * Do not use hot water. This will melt the snow, but may well replace it with black ice increasing the risk of injury;
- * Choose suitable clothing for the task, e.g. Footwear that provides a good grip;
- * Do not take unnecessary risks in the road. Traffic will find it difficult to stop quickly in icy conditions. When clearing snow and ice, wear visible clothing that helps traffic to see you;
- * If shovelling snow, think about where you are going to put it so that it does not block people's paths or simply shift the problem elsewhere. Make sure it will not cause problems when it melts. Piling snow over gullies or drains may stop melting snow from draining away and allow it to refreeze;
- * Clear a small path down the middle of the area to be cleared first, so you have a safe surface to walk on. You can then shovel from the centre to the sides;
- * Spread some grit on the area you have cleared to prevent ice forming. If necessary, ordinary table salt or dishwasher salt will work, but avoid spreading on plants or grass;
- * If there is no salt available, then a little sand or ash can be used. It will not have the same de-icing properties as salt but should offer grip under foot;
- * Use the sun to your advantage. Removing the top layer of snow will allow the sun to melt any ice beneath, but you will need to cover any ice with salt to stop refreezing overnight;
- * Salt can be washed away by further snowfalls or rain and then refreeze, leaving black ice. If this happens more salt should be used before temperatures reach freezing;
- * Particular care and attention should be given to steps and steep slopes. Additional salt could be used in these areas to reduce the risk of slipping;
- * Try to sweep up any excess grit, sand or other substances used come the thaw.

Emergency Kit (things I may need during bad weather)

Although not exhaustive, here is a list of items you may wish to consider storing in case of bad weather when you may not be able to leave your home. It is also worth considering supplies you may need in case of a power cut:

- 😊 Canned/no-cook food (bread, crackers, dried fruits);
- 😊 Drinking water;
- 😊 Non-electric can opener;
- 😊 Prescription drugs and other medicine;
- 😊 First-aid kit;
- 😊 Rock-salt to melt ice on walkways;
- 😊 Flashlight and extra batteries;
- 😊 Battery-powered radio or wind up radio;
- 😊 Fully charged mobile phone;
- 😊 Any pet food required;
- 😊 Long life or powdered milk;
- 😊 Books and magazines;
- 😊 Crosswords and puzzles;
- 😊 Emergency contact list
- 😊 Battery-powered lamps or lanterns (To prevent the risk of fire, avoid using candles);
- 😊 Blankets and extra clothes should your heating not work;
- 😊 Juice and enhanced waters in boxes and plastic bottles;



☺ Supply of cat litter or bag of sand to add traction on walkways;

Keeping Affordably Warm this Winter

Energy prices keep rising and many people will struggle this winter living in a cold home or will get into fuel debt.

There is help out there to support people who are struggling to keep their home warm. To identify if someone needs help ask these four key questions:

- ❖ Is their home cold?
- ❖ Is their home damp?
- ❖ Is their home draughty?
- ❖ Are they concerned about affording energy in their home?
- ❖ If the answer is 'yes' to any of these, what next?

Support is available through:

1) the Scottish Government's Energy Assistance Package. Just ring the Energy Saving Scotland advice centre on 0800 512 012 for more information.

2) Changeworks' Warm and Well Midlothian provide support to people who struggle with heating costs. Warm and Well supports anyone in Midlothian whose health may be affected by living in a cold, damp or draughty home. Older people, young families and people with health difficulties are particularly vulnerable, so we work with health and social work professionals, amongst others. We provide tailored advice on affordable warmth through home visits, talks and events.

3) The Scottish Government says: "A person is living in fuel poverty if, to heat their home to a satisfactory standard, they need to spend more than 10 per cent of their household income on fuel."

If you would like to contact one of their advisors - email: ask@changeworks.org.uk
www.changeworks.org.uk/projects/warm-and-well-midlothian



Cold Weather Payment/Sign Up

With a squeeze being applied at every turn to disabled people, we will have to use every measure to reduce out-going money.

Cold Weather Payments are made by the Government to households in receipt of qualifying benefits during periods of cold weather. These payments are to help with the extra heating costs if the average temperature where you live is recorded as 0°C or below for seven days in a row. Eligible households will get £25 for each seven day period between 1 November and 31 March, paid in the same way as their normal benefits. To qualify for cold weather payments you will:

- * Have a child living with you who was born on or after 01 April 2008;
- * Receive Incapacity Benefit or Severe Disablement Allowance;
- * Receive Disability Living Allowance or you receive Disability Living Allowance on behalf of a child living with you;

- * Receive War Disablement Pension;
- * Receive Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit;
- * Receive an additional payment (such as the work-related activity group or support component of Employment and Support Allowance) because of sickness or disability.

You will be required to contact your energy provider and complete the registration form :

<https://britishgaswarmhomediscount.com/> or 0800 072 8625

<https://www.edfenergy.com/for-home/help-support/warm-home-discount> or call 0800 015 0960

www.eonenergy.com/for-your-home/saving-energy/need-little-extra-help/warm-home-discount/warm-home-discount-form or call 0843 506 9877

http://www.npower.com/spreading_warmth/home/warm-home-discount/ or call 0808 172 6999

<https://www.sse.co.uk/help/accessibility/warm-home-discount#item1> or 0800 300 111

<https://www.scottishpower.co.uk/customer-services/support/warm-home-discount/> or 0800 027 0072

Scottish Power has made a Winter Commitment:

No upper limit on the number of customers who can receive the Warm Home Discount Broader Group Rebate;

A written estimated saving quote sent to all quarterly credit customers;

Free insulation and heating measures for qualifying customers;

A winter debt recovery break for their most vulnerable prepayment customers.

And No Winter Disconnections!



Warm Home Discount Scheme

For winter 2016 to 2017, you could get £140 off your electricity bill through the Warm Home Discount Scheme.

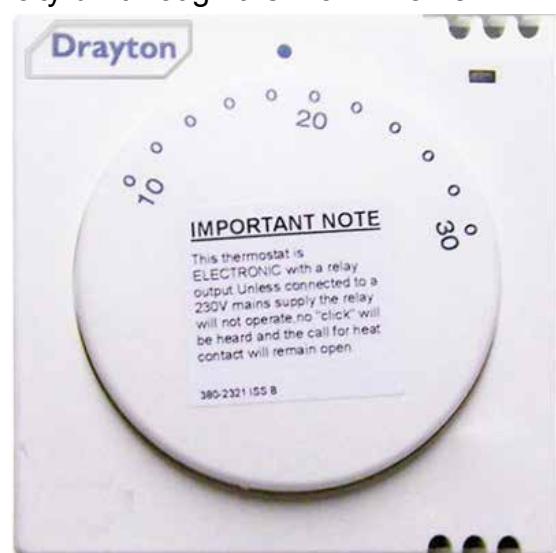
The money isn't paid to you - it's a one-off discount on your electricity bill, usually between September and March.

The discount won't affect your Cold Weather Payment or Winter Fuel Payment.

Pre-pay or pay-as-you-go meters

You can also qualify for the discount if you use a pre-pay or pay-as-you-go electricity meter.

Your electricity supplier can tell you how you'll get the discount if you're eligible, eg a voucher you can use to top up your meter.



Eligibility

You qualify for the discount if on 12 July 2016 all of the following apply:

Your electricity supplier was part of the scheme

Your name (or your partner's) was on the bill

You were getting the Guarantee Credit element of Pension Credit (even if you get Savings Credit as well)

If you don't qualify

You may be able to apply directly to your electricity supplier for help if you don't get the Guarantee Credit element of Pension Credit but:

You're on a low income



You get certain means-tested benefits

Check with your supplier to see if you're eligible and how to apply.



Electricity suppliers. The following suppliers are part of the scheme:

- Atlantic 0800 300 111
- British Gas 0800 072 8625
- Co-operative energy 0800 954 0693 <https://www.cooperativeenergy.coop/warm-home-discount-eligibility/> have an online tool to check eligibility.
- EDF Energy 0800 072 8625
- E.ON Online only www.eonenergy.com/for-your-home/saving-energy/need-little-extra-help/warm-home-discount/warm-home-discount-form
- Equipower (Ebico) 0800 458 7689
- Equigas (Ebico) 0800 458 7689
- First Utility: Online only firstutilitywarmhomediscount.com/
- Manweb - see ScottishPower 0800 027 0072
- M&S Energy 0800 294 3263
- npower 0808 172 6999
- OVO: Only online ovowarmhomediscount.com/
- Sainsbury's Energy - see British Gas
- Scottish Gas - see British Gas
- Scottish Hydro: 0800 300 111
- ScottishPower: 0800 027 0072
- Southern Electric: 0800 300 111
- SSE: 0800 300 111
- SWALEC: 0800 300 111
- Utilita: 03452 072 000
- Utility Warehouse: Online only www.utilitywarehouse.co.uk/clubhouse/warmhome



How to claim

If you qualify for the discount, you'll get a letter this autumn or winter telling you either:

- You don't have to apply - you'll get the discount automatically
- To apply by 29 January 2017 - the letter will tell you why and how

You'll receive your letter by 24 December at the latest.

Some Good Sources of up-to-date Communication if it Snows!

Social Media

Midlothian Council: Website: www.midlothian.gov.uk/

Twitter: twitter.com/#!/midgov

Facebook: www.facebook.com/MidlothianCouncil



Midlothian Voluntary Action

Website: www.mvacvs.org.uk/

Twitter: twitter.com/MVACommunity or @MVACommunity

Facebook: www.facebook.com/MidlothianVoluntaryAction



Other Essential Contacts

For all other essential contact details see the Ready Scotland website:

www.readyscotland.org/are-you-ready/severe-weather/

Lothian Buses website: www.lothianbuses.com

Twitter: twitter.com/on_lothianbuses

(A good site to check if you have a Smartphone and want to know if the bus you are waiting on has got stuck in snow!)

Lothian Buses now have free WiFi aboard most buses that transit Midlothian.

There are multiple free WiFi hotspots around Midlothian, Most Cafes, some public houses and all Libraries, sign up to as many as you can so you can get access to the information while you are out and about.

When it snows the demand for taxis increases dramatically so the wait for one will also increase, please remember the taxi driver also has to drive according to weather conditions.

Getting Help With your Health

Where you can go for help with your health

We know that it can be frustrating if there is a long wait to see your doctor. However your GP is not always the best person to see. Think about what your health problem is before you phone your GP and try one of these alternatives:

NURSE

Nurses are experienced in dealing with many conditions such as high blood pressure, asthma and diabetes and a range of minor illnesses such as chest, urine and ear infections and skin conditions. Many can prescribe medication and arrange investigations. Nurse appointments are often easier to get than a doctor's.

PHARMACIST

You can get free advice for minor illnesses such as flu, sore ears and throats, acne, constipation, eczema and allergies, hayfever, indigestion, mouth ulcers, warts and stopping smoking. You may also be able to register for free treatment – ask your pharmacist if you qualify. You can also see your pharmacist in private.

GP PHONE APPOINTMENT

If you don't need to be examined then a phone appointment is often quicker and easier. If the doctor feels they need to see you they will arrange it.



DENTIST

If you have a problem with your teeth, gums or tongue tel: ☎ 0131 537 8444 to find a dentist.

HEALTH VISITOR

For advice and non-urgent treatment for a baby or child.



PHYSIOTHERAPIST

For muscle and joint problems such as back pain, neck pain, shoulder problems, knee, hip or foot pain you can get advice and, if necessary, an appointment to see a physiotherapist by appointment tel: ☎ 0800 917 9390, 9am - 6pm Monday to Friday

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

For depression, anxiety or other mental health problems, Midspace is a website which can direct you to local services – www.midspace.co.uk . Midlothian Wellbeing Access Point is an open-access service for those who don't need medication or urgent treatment but might benefit from talking therapies or other support – phone ☎ 0131 536 8981 to find out when and where the service operates. BreathingSpace can help if you need to talk to someone – ☎ 0800 83 85 87 or www.breathingspace.scot and the Samaritans are on ☎ 116 123

ALCOHOL AND DRUG PROBLEMS

For advice and support go to the Gateway to Recovery clinic. For more information tel: ☎ 0131 660 6822 or go to www.meldap.co.uk

OPTICIAN

If you have a problem with your eyes, make an appointment at any high street optician.



CARERS

If you are a carer contact VOCAL on  0131 663 6869 or go to www.vocal.org.uk for information and advice.

AND DON'T FORGET.....

If you can't make your GP appointment please phone and cancel. Around 4% of appointments are wasted as people do not turn up. This equates to hundreds of missed appointments across Midlothian each month! Only ask for a home visit if it is absolutely necessary and you are housebound.

What is a restricted list? and what does this mean.

GPs who are working at full capacity are temporarily unable to take on more new patients except under very specific arrangements. This is to ensure the safe and effective care of their existing patients.

Who is affected by these restrictions?

If you are already registered with a practice you will continue to receive a normal service. All new babies, and other family members who move in with you, will be able to register with the same practice as you. The restrictions only affect people who move into the area or want to change their practice for another reason.

What do I do if the practice that I want to join has a restricted list?

If your local GP practice has a restricted list you should approach a different practice in the local area that covers your address. If there are no other practices accepting new patients and you cannot find a GP you can collect an assignment form from one of the practices and send it to our partner organisation 'Practitioner Services' who will allocate you to a GP practice in the local area. Their address is: NHS NSS Practitioner Services - Medical, Gyle Square, 1 South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 9EB. Alternatively you can phone them to request an assignment form on  0131 275 7038.

No one should be unable to register with a GP practice – everyone will be supported to have access to a GP.

NHS 24 can provide you with health information and self-care advice.

Call  111 twenty-four hours a day.

NHS Inform  0800 22 44 88 or www.nhsinform.co.uk provides comprehensive health information



Emergency Helpline for Severe Weather Conditions

Midlothian Council's Social Work team will run an emergency helpline which is activated and publicised if severe weather arrives. This is for elderly, disabled and vulnerable people without other means of support – for example where carers or family members are unavailable.

The helpline can assist if someone is running out of their prescription medication and/or basic groceries like milk and bread. Midlothian Council works in partnership with the British Red Cross so they can arrange for a volunteer to pick up and deliver



an emergency prescription or supplies to your home.

It is important that everyone keeps in contact with any friends and neighbours who might require assistance during periods of severe weather. Older people particularly value the information and support they receive from neighbours during these times. Someone they know popping round can help to reduce feelings of loneliness and isolation.

If you would like to help any elderly or vulnerable people in your area, you could contact your local community council.

If the weather is bad, you (or someone you know) might be concerned about transport or whether a Midlothian Council facility has had to close. For up-to-date information during severe weather, visit www.midlothian.gov.uk or call the contact centre on 0131 663 7211.

In an emergency, the Social Work Department can be contacted on 0800 731 6969 (out of normal office hours).

Other key phone numbers in Midlothian:

Emergency Telephone list	
Emergency Services	999
Non Emergency Police	101
NHS24	111
Midlothian Council	0131 270 7500/663 7211
Midlothian Social Work Services	0131 271 3900
National Gas Emergency Service (if you smell gas)	0800 111 999
Scottish Power Energy Networks	0800 092 92 90
Scottish Water	0845 601 8855
Extreme severe weather, for vulnerable people	0131 271 3233
Housing repairs	0131 663 7211
Midcare (Telecare) Midlothian	0131 271 3900
Carers VOCAL Midlothian	0131 663 6869
Lothian Centre for Inclusive Living	0131 475 2350
British Red Cross	0131 654 0340
Midlothian Community Hospital	0131 454 1001
Midlothian Council – Housing Benefits	0131 271 3201
Midlothian Council – Direct Payments	0131 271 3900
Midlothian Refuse/Wheelie Bins	0131 561 5284
Midlothian Recycling	0845 130 2322
Lothian Buses	0131 554 4494
Midlothian Travel Team	0131 561 5443
Dial-a-Bus Midlothian	0131 447 1718
Dial-a-Ride Midlothian	0131 447 9949
Citizens Advice Bureau Dalkeith	0131 660 1636
Citizens Advice Bureau Penicuik	01968 675 259
My Doctor	
My Plumber	
My Emergency Contact	

After the Snow Comes the Thaw

After a period of severe winter weather, the thaw comes as a relief. But it has its own risks and challenges. You can prepare for these by taking some simple steps and keeping up to date on the current situation.

Burst Pipes

In the coldest days of winter the water pipes around the house can freeze. As the water turns to ice it expands, this will cause the pipe to burst, when it defrosts and the ice has turned back to a liquid is the first indication you have a burst pipe. Make sure you know where to locate the stop valve which controls the water supply entering your home. If you suspect you have a burst pipe, turn off the water supply immediately.



Icicles and excess snow on roofs

If your property has large amounts of overhanging snow or large icicles, try to make anyone entering it aware of the risk (a simple note on your door may do the job). If you are confident that it is safe to do so, you should try to remove overhanging icicles that pose a threat on your own property - but ladders should not be used in icy conditions, nor should you hang out of windows to reach roof areas. It is important to let children know of the risks of falling icicles - and of the danger of throwing snow or any other objects onto (or at) icicles or snowy roofs.



Alternative Publications

Editions of the Forward MID newsletters are available in large print or at www.forwardmid.org.uk. For alternative publications, please email eric.johnstone@mvacvs.org.uk or call Eric Johnstone on 0131-663-9471 or write to Eric at MVA, 4-6 White Hart Street, Dalkeith EH22 1AE with your request.