

The Highland Council
Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd

Snow plough photo by Ewen Weatherspoon.

Winter services
Seirbheisean geamhraidh

Caithness

Information on clearing snow, gritting council roads, services and priority routes.

Road conditions

Our aim is to help you keep safe on our roads, whether you are a driver or a pedestrian. We take steps we consider reasonable to prevent snow and ice forming on the council road network (not private roads) including footways. Throughout the period mid-October to mid-April our staff assess weather forecasts in each of our local Area offices. We use this information, along with 'real time' information from our sophisticated ice-detection system, to make daily action plans for treating council roads in accordance with our winter service policy.

Treatment times

We do NOT operate a 24 hour service. Our operations, Monday to Sunday, commence at 6am and continue until 9pm. Treatment after 6pm is generally restricted to Primary routes. There is no overnight service.

On days classed as public holidays, a restricted service is provided which starts at 7am.

Trunk roads

We are not responsible for winter maintenance on trunk roads.
The Scottish Government Agency, Transport Scotland has appointed Operating Companies to manage and maintain trunk roads in the Highlands.

Trunk Roads within Highland are the routes: A9, A82, A86, A87, A95, A96, A99 (Latheron to Wick), A828, A830, A835, A887 and A889.

Route priorities

→ **Primary** (Highest) - Treated from 6am to 9pm Monday to Sunday, generally covering all the A class roads and some B class and including main commuter routes in the larger urban areas.

→ **Secondary** - Treated mostly after the primary network has been completed between 6am and 6pm Monday to Sunday and covering roads which in general connect smaller communities to the primary network. On bus routes, gritting will not necessarily be completed before buses start their journeys.

→ **Other** - These are minor rural and local access and residential roads. We will treat these roads as resources become available.

Driver Safety

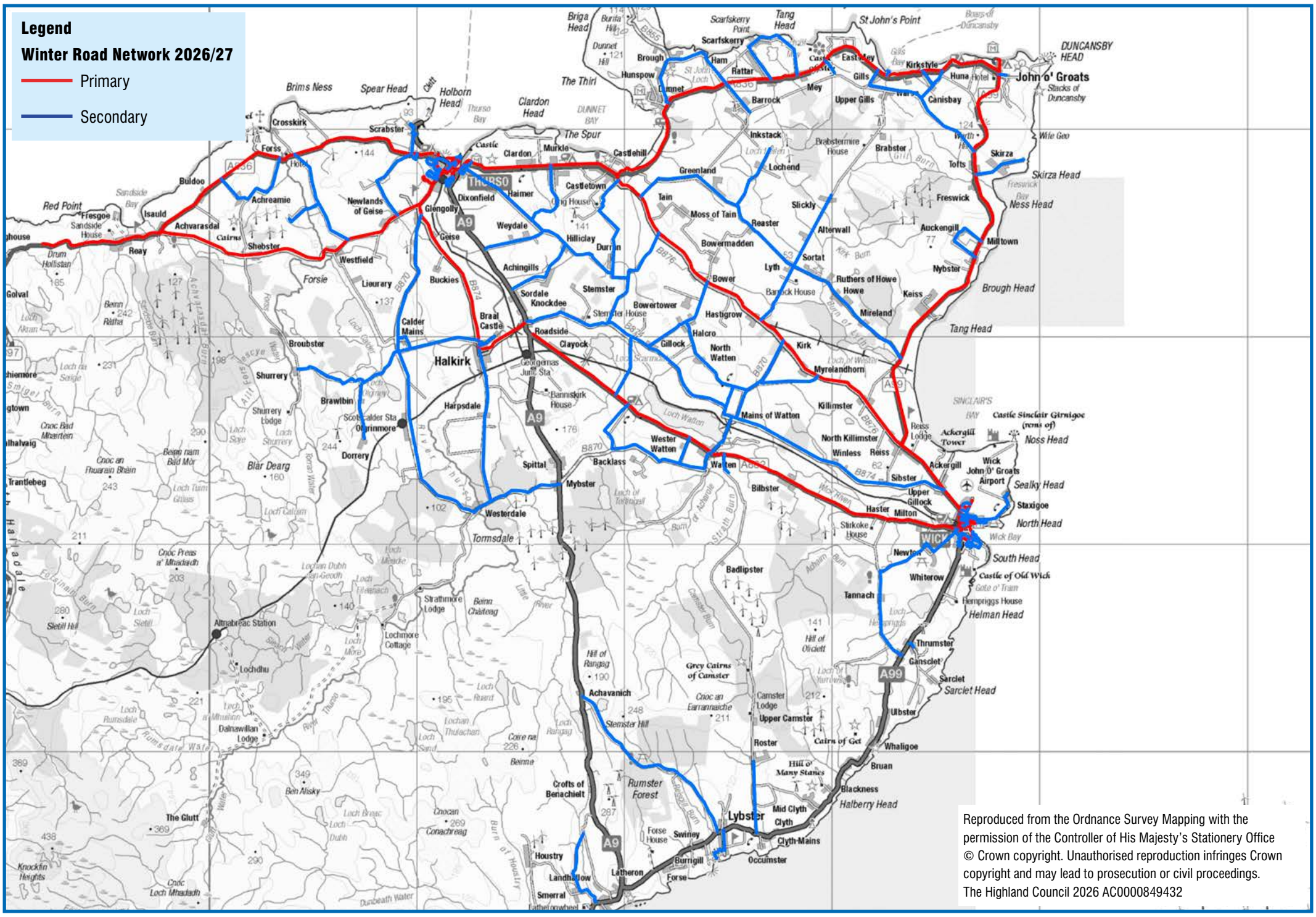
Salting will not prevent roads from icing up in extreme conditions.
This is particularly relevant on low traffic roads where there are insufficient vehicle movements to aid the interaction between the salt and the ice crystals.

- Driver should take account of prevailing weather and road conditions.
- Winter weather conditions within the Highlands can be very localised.
- Black ice can be a particular danger. You cannot see it and it can still be there even after treatment.
- Dawn frosts can also catch drivers unaware. At first light a clear sky will allow heat to radiate quickly from the road surface causing icy patches to form on wet or damp roads.

Footways

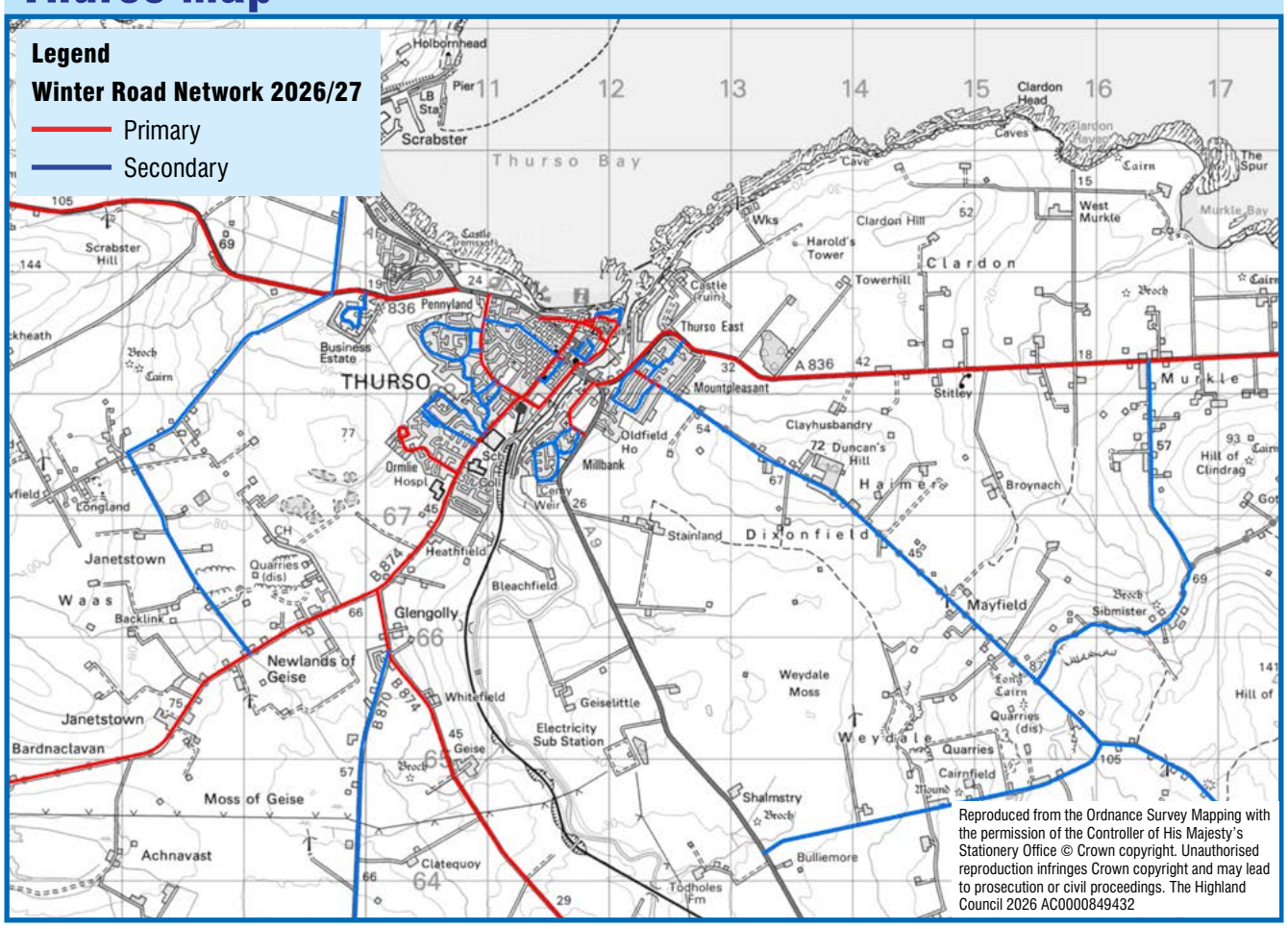
Our footways are treated on a priority basis, with those in main shopping areas treated first. Subject to the weather, treatment may be extended to footways serving schools, hospitals and other commercial areas. Residential footways will, in general, be treated last.

Caithness area map



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Thurso map



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Be prepared

If you must make a journey in difficult conditions, prepare yourself beforehand and consider the following points.

Prepare your vehicle

- Make sure your vehicle is fit for the journey.
- Top up the windscreen-washer.
- Check that all your lights are working – remember **'it's not to see, but to be seen'**.
- Check your tyre pressures and tread depths.
- Consider also the benefits of fitting winter tyres, particularly if you are driving in rural areas.
- Prepare for frost by keeping a de-icer spray and scraper in the car.

Prepare yourself

- Take a blanket or extra warm clothing.
- Take a flask with a hot drink and some food.
- Take a torch, boots and a shovel.

Contact numbers and further information

The Highland Council

During working hours:
01349 886601

Emergency out-of-hours:
01349 886690
(overnight between 5pm and 8am Monday to Friday and all day Saturday and Sunday)

BEAR (Trunk Roads)

0800 028 1414

The Highland Council website:

www.highland.gov.uk

The Highland Council twitter:

@HighlandCouncil

Traffic Scotland website:

www.trafficscotland.org

Remember black roads do not mean ice free roads.

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Help keep Highland roads safe this winter. Don't let winter catch you out.