

We all know how cold it has been over the last couple of winters; with this in mind **GGHT** is keen to ensure that both people and their homes are prepared to tackle any severe weather this year. Below is some information that hopefully will help...



## Protecting your home and possessions:

With all the problems of the snow and ice, the last thing you want is the additional problem of burst or frozen water pipes. Check out our quick tips guide below to help prevent burst or frozen water pipes.

- ❖ Ensure you have your central heating system serviced annually. This is a legal requirement for landlords and a condition of your tenancy with **GGHT**. A leaking radiator valve can also cause water and damp problems.
- ❖ In cold weather, check all your taps from time to time. If little or no water flows there may be frozen water in the pipes.
- ❖ Know where to find your stop tap! Then you can cut off the flow of water if a pipe starts leaking.
- ❖ If you go away, leave the central heating on 'constant' (set your thermostat to low) to prevent freezing. Whatever you do - do not turn it off.
- ❖ Ask a friend, neighbour or relative to check your home while you are away. This will ensure burst pipes are spotted early and damp and water damage is minimized.
- ❖ Turn off any indoor valves on pipes that lead to taps outside your home. Then open the outside

tap and leave it open to let any water drain. This ensures there is no water in the pipes to freeze.

- ❖ Ensure you have adequate content insurance to cover the event of a flood or burst pipe. For further information on **GGHT** Tenants content insurance scheme, please contact us free on **0800 25 26 27** or visit our website **www.gght.org.uk**

If you have the unfortunate experience of waking up to frozen pipes you should turn on your taps, as this will relieve the pressure as the ice melts inside the pipes. You can use appliances such as a blow dryer or a heat lamp to defrost the pipe. Under no circumstances should you use a blow torch or candle. In addition, you can leave your water running a very small, slow trickle through the pipes to prevent them from freezing again. If you have tried to defrost the pipe yourself, or are unsure what to do please call us free on **0800 25 26 27**.



There will also be regular cold weather update information and advice on our website [www.gght.org.uk](http://www.gght.org.uk) and on [www.facebook.com/goldengateshousingtrust](https://www.facebook.com/goldengateshousingtrust)



# GGHT Christmas closedown and services:

GGHT will close for the Christmas holidays from 6.30pm on Friday 23 December 2011. The out of hour's service offering urgent repair and anti-social behaviour issues will operate until 8am on Wednesday 28 December 2011.

Some examples of urgent repairs are listed below.

- ❖ Loss of heating
- ❖ Blocked drain
- ❖ Lost keys – you may be charged for this repair
- ❖ Broken/insecure external doors
- ❖ Loss of hot water
- ❖ Roof leak
- ❖ Broken glass to windows/doors
- ❖ Faulty smoke alarm
- ❖ Uncontrolled water leak
- ❖ Electrical faults
- ❖ Faulty communal door entry system



If you need to contact us during this period please call us free **0800 25 26 27** or **01925 452452** (mobile phone users).

Following a particularly cold Christmas period last year which placed high demand on services GGHT will be making the key services listed below available between 8am and 4pm on the 28, 29 and 30 December.

- ❖ Our service centre will be open between 8am and 4pm
- ❖ Our emergency repair service will remain in operation
- ❖ Appointments will be available for urgent repairs
- ❖ We will be able to deal with any enquiries you may have. If we are unable to answer you

enquiry we will arrange a call back when normal business starts again on Tuesday 3 January 2012.

Outside these times our telephone lines will divert to out of hours service who will continue to provide an emergency service.

Remember if you smell gas you must phone **0800 111 999 AND**

- ❖ Turn off the gas supply at the meter
- ❖ Open all windows and doors
- ❖ Do not turn anything electrical on or off including lights as this may cause an explosion
- ❖ Do not smoke or light matches or candles
- ❖ Do not use a lighter

## Winter health & safety tips:

### Walking in snow and ice:

Always wear appropriate footwear and with good soles. Avoid paths that are in the shade, if possible, delay your journey until the sun has had a chance to melt the icy areas.

**Handy tip:** A pair of old socks worn over your shoes will help increase their grip on snow and ice.

### Driving in snow and ice:

Don't assume that salted roads offer the same level of safety as those that are dry. Leave plenty of time for your journey. Try to avoid using minor roads wherever possible. Reduce speed when driving in ice or

snow and do not drive too close to the car in front. Always drive smoothly and keep in the highest possible gear.

**Handy tip:** If you're stuck on ice, put your car mats under the wheels. The mats will most likely get destroyed, but it almost always works to get you out.

### Keeping warm, staying safe & preventing illness

In a typical winter, temperatures are low enough to affect the health of vulnerable people. Cold snaps can



happen suddenly, and rapid drops in temperature quickly affect vulnerable people. So it is best to be prepared before cold temperatures are forecast – ideally by the beginning of November. Follow these tips to keep your family warm and well during cold weather

- ❖ Have regular hot drinks and at least one hot meal a day if possible. Eating regularly helps keep energy levels up during winter.
- ❖ Wear several light layers of warm clothes (rather than one chunky layer).
- ❖ Keep as active as possible.
- ❖ Use only portable heating equipment that is approved for indoor use.
- ❖ Keep your main living room at around 18-21C (64-70F), and the rest of the house at least 16C (61F). If you can't heat all the rooms you use, heat the livingroom during the day and the bedroom just before you go to sleep.
- ❖ Keep combustible materials, including furniture and curtains at least three feet away from the heat source. NEVER drape clothes over a space heater to dry.
- ❖ Always keep an eye on heating equipment. Never leave children alone in the room where a

space heater is running. Turn it off when you are unable to closely monitor it.

- ❖ Be careful not to overload electrical circuits.
- ❖ Make sure you have a working smoke detector in every room. Check and change batteries often.
- ❖ Close curtains as soon as it starts to go dark.
- ❖ Cover yourself with a blanket when watching television
- ❖ Invest in a hot water bottle or electric blanket. But do not use them at the same time.
- ❖ Stock up on tinned and frozen foods to reduce the need to go out during extreme cold weather
- ❖ Ensure that you keep an adequate supply of any prescribed medication.
- ❖ If you have a pre payment meter for gas or electricity, ensure that you keep as much credit on the metre as your budget allows.
- ❖ Where possible keep a watchful eye on your neighbours and if you have any concerns contact **GGHT** free on **0800 25 26 27**.
- ❖ Make sure you are maximising your income, for a free benefits check call our money advice team free on **0800 25 26 27**.

## Decoration Safety Tips:

### Trees

- ❖ When purchasing an artificial tree, look for a "Fire Resistant" label.
- ❖ When purchasing a live tree, check for freshness. Make sure the needles are soft and don't fall off.

- ❖ Live trees need water, and lots of it. Cut about one inch off the bottom of the trunk before putting the tree in the stand. Add water and check the tree daily. Dry trees can catch fire and burn in seconds.
- ❖ Do not block your exit door with your tree.
- ❖ Remove live trees from your home as soon as possible. Most Christmas tree fires occur on or after New Year's Day.

### Lights

- ❖ Check each light set for damaged sockets or wires. Discard light sets and extension cords that are worn or cracked.
- ❖ Follow the manufacturer's recommendations concerning the maximum number of light sets that can be connected together.
- ❖ Replace burnt out bulbs with bulbs of the same wattage as indicated on the tag attached to the light set.
- ❖ Turn off all lights when you go to bed or leave the home.
- ❖ Use only light sets and extension cords marked "For Outdoor Use" outside your home.
- ❖ Fasten outdoor lights securely with insulated clips or hooks. Use circuits protected by a Residual Current Device (RCD).





# Warrington Borough Council (WBC):

Below is some information on what WBC is doing this winter...



**WBC** severe weather winter helpline – stay at home and stay safe

If the weather conditions become dangerous again this winter, **WBC** will be operating the severe weather helpline to provide essential assistance to those who need it most, particularly older people and those with poor mobility.

### We can help with:

- ❖ Shopping delivery
- ❖ Pension collection and payment of bills
- ❖ Prescription collection and delivery

### Unfortunately we're not able to help with:

- ❖ Boiler and water supply problems
- ❖ Clearing paths and driveways
- ❖ Support to leave your home

The helpline will remain open during normal office hours whilst the weather is severe. So stay at home, stay safe and call the helpline if you need to on **01925 442244**.

An out of hours service will also operate in the evenings, weekends and on bank holidays, but this will be restricted to emergencies only. Telephone: **01925 444400**.

### Gritting Info -

**GGHT** is not responsible for gritting, this is the responsibility of **WBC**. Here is some information that may answer your questions...

### How and when?

**WBC** aim to ensure that salt is spread on the highway before ice forms. They achieve this by dividing the borough into five routes and use a fleet of five gritters to cover the pre-identified routes.

### Which roads are gritted?

In determining which roads are gritted, there are two types of gritting routes - primary and secondary. When the road surface temperatures are forecast to go below freezing with ice or frost expected, the primary routes would be treated.

### Bin collections throughout the Christmas 2011 period -

Over this year's festive period black and blue bin collection services will continue to operate during the week Tuesday 27 December to Friday 31 December, this will mean residents don't miss a collection, as bins will be emptied on their usual collection day. Collection dates in your area are detailed on stickers on your bins.

For more information on **WBC** services check out [www.warrington.gov.uk](http://www.warrington.gov.uk) or call the **WBC** contact centre on **01925 443322**.

