

LOCAL COUNCILS MUST GRIT ROADS

This week's Government announcement that local councils will soon have a legal duty to grit roads during icy weather, has been applauded by health and safety lawyers.

The Association of Personal Injury Lawyers (APIL) has long campaigned for legislation to force local authorities to keep roads free of ice in severe weather conditions. A year ago APIL research highlighted discrepancies between the gritting practices of different authorities which made road safety a lottery.

Frances McCarthy, former president of APIL and a campaigner for road gritting said: "We're delighted at the Government's decision – it's great news for the nation's motorists and could save lives. It means the end of the safety lottery for motorists and their passengers, in which the likelihood of hitting hazardous driving conditions is dependent on where you live."

Her comments follow Cabinet Office Minister and transport spokesperson Lord McDonald of Tradeston's written answer to a parliamentary question. He stated: "We shall introduce a duty for a highway authority to remove ice when a suitable legislative opportunity presents itself."

AP208

Frances added: “Whilst we welcome the announcement it is vital that the Government doesn’t drag its heels on this and wastes no time in introducing statutory standards for gritting roads.”

At the moment local road users have to rely on their authority’s level of compliance with the voluntary Code of Good Practice on Highway Maintenance.

-ends-

Note to editors: For further information, please contact:

Lorraine Gwinnutt
Press & Parliamentary Manager
APIL
11 Castle Quay
Nottingham
NG7 1FW
Tel: 0115 9580585
Fax: 0115 9243485
email: lorraine@apil.com

or

Jo Garner
Press & PR Officer
APIL
Tel: 0115 958 0585
Fax: 0115 9243485
email: jog@apil.com