



NHS

Bristol

Life Cycle  UK

How and why employers
should be encouraging
cycle-commuters to
prepare for icy weather

think **twice***
cycling in icy weather



why employers should act

Cyclists underestimate the hazard posed by ice. We urge employers to help them to stay safe when getting to work in frozen conditions – to think twice.

Leading employers know that cycling is an excellent way for staff to get to work, keep fit, reduce car park management charges, and reduce sickness absence. But we also all want cyclists to be safe.

A recent survey has revealed that one in four 'non-collision incidents' involving cyclists result from slips and falls in icy weather¹.



In fact, slips on ice are three times as frequent as any other cause of non-collision incident – yet frozen conditions occur on just a few days of the year. Around half of these incidents occur on the commute to and from work.

While around two thirds of these incidents result in no serious injury to the cyclist, there are implications for the others.

- ★ Cyclists involved in these incidents may be less likely to cycle in future, which will reduce the benefits to be gained.
- ★ There is a low likelihood of serious injury, and much higher likelihood of minor injury, both of which will impact on staff availability.
- ★ Some of the incidents result in costs for the NHS, which ultimately also means a cost to business and individuals.
- ★ But most important, none of us want to see people getting hurt, so we have a responsibility to take sensible measures which can help prevent this.



what employers can do

We ask travel planners, HR managers, bike user groups – or whoever has an interest or responsibility for the welfare of cyclists at work – to help their employees make informed decisions in icy weather. Help your employees prepare for icy weather by taking a few simple actions:

Be a cycling-friendly business

Encourage a cycling culture at your place of work – but make it safe. Take measures to ensure your cyclists know the rules of the road, and their bikes are in tip-top condition – all things which will help if the weather gets bad.

Communicate

Make sure employees are aware of the hazards of cycling during icy periods, so they can make informed decisions about how to travel. Give them information to allow them to plan ahead.

Be flexible

If possible, allow your employees to work from home during extreme icy weather, or grant flexibility about start and finish times to avoid the worst of the weather.

Plan as a business

Build plans, policies and procedures to help cyclists during icy weather. Amend inclement weather policies, if you need to, to highlight cyclists' needs and vulnerability in frozen conditions. Create such a policy, if you don't have one. For a model 'inclement weather' policy, visit our website pages on cycling on ice².

Encourage

Ask your staff to plan ahead; encourage car-sharing or provide information on alternative ways to get to work.

Consult

Support your Bike User Group to suggest ways they can help cyclists in winter. This will help raise awareness of the hazards posed by ice.

Follow through

Have an action plan and implement it!

Publicise

Circulate links to the websites¹⁺² and encourage cyclists to record their non-collision incidents.



the details

Survey results

The information in this leaflet is based on a survey on the Better by Bike website¹ about non-collision incidents. Major conclusions are:

- ★ 63–70% result in no significant injury
- ★ 25% are caused by slipping on ice
- ★ 51% occur on the commute to work
- ★ Slipping on ice causes: 35% of all non-collision incidents on the commute to work; an estimated 1,662 hospital admissions in England; and around 10,000 visits to A&E each year
- ★ 1 in 4 people who slipped on ice needed emergency hospital treatment

The results of the survey are backed up by Hospital Episode Statistics (HES) which show that non-collision incidents to cyclists are a major cause of road travel related injury that we need to do more to prevent.

When asked, only a tiny proportion of cyclists quote 'ice' as a cause of non-collision incidents

Website resources

Visit our website² for:

- ★ Our good practice guide on how cyclists can cope with icy weather
- ★ A model inclement weather policy
- ★ Publicity materials, including a Highways Agency poster
- ★ Full analysis of the survey results

References

- 1** Over 1,000 people responded to a survey on the Better by Bike website www.betterbybike.info/non-collision-incidents
- 2** Life Cycle UK's website contains pages dedicated to cycling in icy weather www.lifecycleuk.org.uk/think-twice-cycling-in-icy-weather

About Life Cycle UK

Life Cycle UK, registered charity 1077575, has a mission to promote cycling.

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