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NATIONAL WINTER SERVICE RESEARCH GROUP

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Mental health in the winter maintenance industry

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Introduction

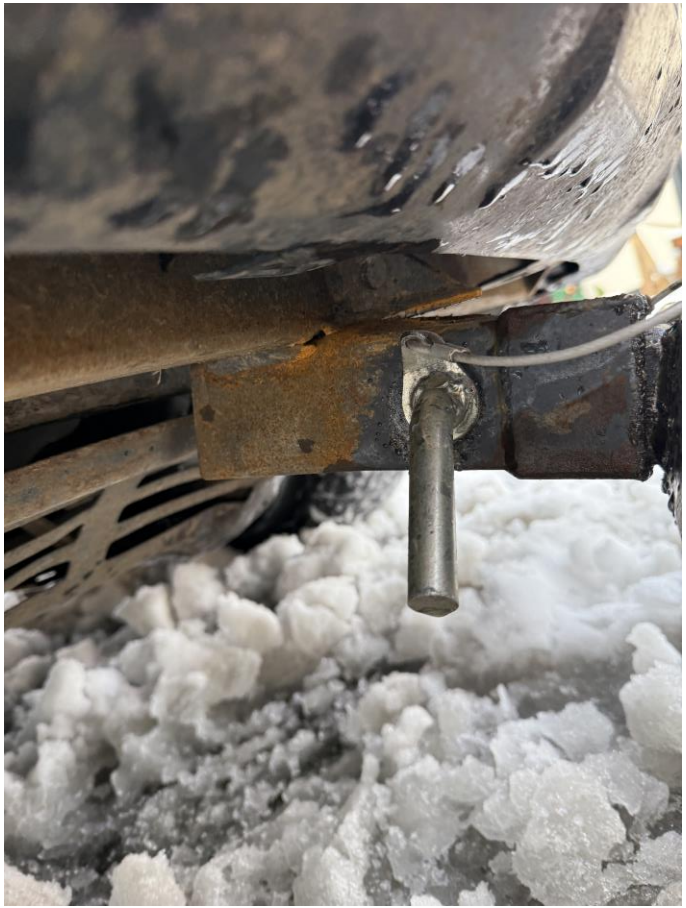
- Why am I talking about this? Share my tales from the front line / mistakes / what to do about it?

- It's not all high fives and being a hero / disclaimer.

- Risk Assessments – Incidents….always multiple failures.

- Picture the scene…….a dark wintry night……

All-Terrain T/A
BFGoodrich



The Pork Pie

- **Medieval roots:** The concept of wrapping meat in pastry has been around since the Middle Ages, with a recipe recorded in 1390!
Also known as "coffins," which were sturdy pastry casings meant to enclose and protect valuable fillings like venison.

Response Fluid Power Services Ltd

Despite what you may feel or think…..
…..you are never alone!!

Winter maintenance professionals work under intense pressure - often through the night, in freezing temperatures and in dangerous driving conditions.

There's a constant pressure to keep roads and public spaces safe, no matter the weather or time of day.

The Mental Strain

- Long, irregular hours can disrupt sleep and family life.
- Working in isolation can lead to loneliness.
- The job carries significant responsibility – mistakes can have serious consequences.
- These factors contribute to stress, anxiety, and burnout.
- Not just front line workers / Supervisors / Management / Support Staff

The impact of ignoring mental health

- Increased absenteeism.
- Reduced focus and productivity.
- Higher risk of accidents.
- Mental health issues can reduce workforce availability, leading to unsafe roads and pavements etc.
- Tired or stressed staff may cut corners, risking incomplete or unsafe treatment.
- If roads , car parks, footpaths, cycleways aren’t properly cleared - accidents and injuries (and claims) among the public can rise.
- Regulatory and legal risks – Employers have a duty of care under UK Health and Safety legislation to protect mental as well as physical health. Neglect could result in legal consequences.

The case for support

Providing access to mental health resources - whether that's counselling, peer support, or awareness training can:

- Improve staff wellbeing and morale.
- Build resilience during tough winter months.
- Reduce accidents and errors.
- Show workers they are valued.

Supporting mental health in the winter maintenance industry (e.g. providing rest breaks, check-ins for lone workers, mental health training for managers, and access to support services) not only protects staff but also ensures reliable winter service delivery.

- Mental health support isn't a luxury - it's a necessity in an industry that keeps the country moving through its toughest months.

- There are lots of charities who can offer support such as Andy's Man Club / Mates in Mind etc.

- Although the subject is largely operational based - We should make it clear that the effects of mental stress covers supply chains in terms of timescale stress / deliveries / client led issues too!

Tales from the frontline…..

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Thank you

Any questions?

Dedicated to advancing understanding of best practice for winter service delivery