

Snow & Ice Management Policy/Guide



Town of Medway Massachusetts

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General

The purpose of this policy/guide is to provide a general overview of the Town of Medway, MA snow and ice program, establish procedures for our snow and ice management on public ways in , review important bylaws, answer frequently asked questions, and most importantly, seek your support in providing safe streets and sidewalks during snow and ice emergencies. The intent of establishing such a policy/guide is to provide a uniform understanding of the priorities and procedures used to combat snow and ice related conditions and create reasonable expectations.

The responsibility for providing snow and ice management for the Town of Medway infrastructure including over 100 miles of roadways and cul-de-sacs rest entirely with the Department of Public Services (DPS). The DPS also provides snow and ice management to all municipal buildings including schools, often with assistance from other departments. Snow and ice management is considered emergency work in that pavement must be cleared any time of the day or night. The DPS will salt and sand during ice and wet snow storms and plow the snow off the roadways during the more significant storms. During a typical Medway winter, 3600 tons of salt and sand are used to keep the roads safe for all drivers.

The Town's snow and ice management strategy has been carefully and professionally prepared to meet the needs of the community. The resulting plan follows clearly identified routes when removing snow and ice from streets, sidewalks and Town parking areas. The DPS performs the majority of the salting and sanding operations in Town. For snowplowing and snow removal work, the Department also utilizes the services of the Water & Sewer Department and local contractors to complement the Town's fleet of 12 vehicles.

Snowplowing, Sanding and Salting

The responsibility for ordering personnel and equipment into service for a winter maintenance operation rests primarily with the Highway Superintendant or his designee. The Police Department, during off hours, keeps watch and assists in notification to the Highway Superintendant or his designee of needed service.

Generally, DPS crews are on the roadways when 2 to 3 inches of snow has accumulated on the roadways. The response time will depend on the moisture of the snow, timing of the storm, duration, freezing rain and blowing snow. Snow has different weight and compacting properties. A fluffy, dry snow requires less

salt, sand and plowing than a heavy, wet snow. Wet snow may result in very slippery conditions especially when the newly fallen snow freezes on the pavement. Medway endorses a “bare pavement” policy to snow removal. This does not mean bare, dry pavement should be expected after each snowfall or ice storm. Furthermore, this does not mean that the streets will be free of ice and snow. It does mean that our snow and ice management techniques are geared toward reaching dry pavement. Expect major roads which receive priority treatment and substantial traffic volume to be clear first. Secondary and neighborhood roads may take several days after a storm to clear.

The time of a storm can also determine when crews will begin their cleanup. Certain areas of the Town have a greater intensity of use and priority for maintenance to serve the users. The concern of safety, general welfare and duration of travel necessitate that priority be given to certain areas over others. During high commuting times, crews will make every effort to keep the major roadways and school bus routes clear of snow and ice. Secondary and side streets will be cleared as soon as possible. Sidewalks are the last priority. Top priority will be given to the heavily traveled roads to ensure everyone's safety. Snow that falls on these roads often becomes packed by cars, making it more difficult to scrape off. During evening and early morning storms, DPS crews usually will have ample time to prepare the roads for the commuting hours. Be aware, however, that storms extending over 12 hours or more will require rest periods to ensure the safety of both our drivers and the public. In these cases, rests are scheduled between 1 and 4 am. Typically, we will be complete with primary response 2 to 3 hours after most snow accumulation has stopped.

The duration of the storm also plays an important role in snowplowing and sanding operations. Storms of extended duration tax all available resources (salt, sand, equipment, and employees) to keep the roads open over an extended period of time. Four inches of snow that falls over a 24 hour period will require more salt, sand and manhours than six inches of snow that falls over an eight hour period. DPS crews will be immediately dispatched with sand and salt when freezing rain falls. Motorists and pedestrians are advised to stay off the road ways until the pavement can be treated. This is also true for sidewalks. Because of high sun, snow that falls in late February and March will melt much faster than snow that falls during December and January, thereby decreasing the plowing, salting and sanding time. **Residents are responsible for snowplowing and snow removal on their own property including all private roadways in Town.**

Snowplowing for Town Hall, Police, Fire, Library, Senior Center, Schools, Water, and Park Facilities

The DPS will plow and remove the snow from parking areas associated with the above facilities. Snow and ice management on walkways and entry ways also is done by the DPS for most of the public buildings. The Library and Schools use their own staff to clear walkways and entryways around their buildings.



Sidewalk Plowing

The DPS will plow sidewalks along central routes that are heavily traveled by children on their way to and from school. The following routes are considered primary routes:

Barber Street	North Street
Broad Street	Pond Street
Cassidy Street	Sanford Street
Legion Avenue	School Street
Center Street	
Highland Street where sidewalks exist	
Oakland Street where sidewalks exist	
Village Street from Center Street to Oakland Street	
Holliston Street from Village Street to Ellis Street	
Lovering Street from Holliston Street to Lovering Heights	
Main Street from Highland Street to Oakland Street	
Maple Street from Lovering Street to Delmar Road	
Summer Street from Milford Street to Holliston Town Line	

In addition, the following routes may be done as time and equipment permit:

Cottage Street	High Street
Main Street from Highland Street to Country Lane	
Milford Street from Main Street to Fales Street	
Village Street from Island Road to Oakland Street	
Village Street from Center Street to Franklin Street	
Franklin Street from Waterview Circle to Main Street	

Sidewalk plowing will not begin until after the snow has stopped falling and plowing has ceased. If we have back to back storms, extended storms, or equipment problems, we may not clear sidewalks immediately after the storm. **DPS crews are not required to sand and/or salt sidewalks.**

Your assistance is important in making sure snow is cleared from the sidewalk in front of your property for streets not listed above. Residents and business owners share in the responsibility to provide safe passage in front of their properties. Be a good neighbor and help those that are not able.



Fire Hydrants/Catch Basins

During winter months, fire hydrants must be accessible and catch basins must be kept free and clear of snow and ice. This ensures the safety of your neighborhood in the event of an emergency. Keeping catch basins clear of snow and ice will reduce the possibility of street flooding during heavy rains or snow melting periods. Did you know that the Water & Sewer Department assists with all snow and ice operations? As a result of this along with normal duties, they remove snow from hydrants only when snow depths make it very difficult to locate and access them. Under such conditions, the Water & Sewer Department often works with the Fire Department, however it is a time consuming and slow process.

Your assistance is important in making sure snow is cleared from hydrants and catch basins. Please shovel the hydrant and catch basin nearest your house after each storm to ensure your property's protection.

Property Damage

During the course of operations throughout any given winter, a certain amount of damage to Town and private property may be incurred by the snow removal forces. If a Town plow or truck damages a mailbox either through direct contact or due to forces of the snow rolling off the plow, you may file for \$50.00 flat rate compensation. Such compensation may only be paid once per snow season. Mailboxes struck more than once a season should be relocated or constructed in a manner not susceptible to damage by plowing.

In addition to mailboxes, a property owner who installs or places any decorative materials, vegetation, or other item within the Town's right-of-way, does so at his/her own risk. The Town is not responsible to repair, replace, or compensate for any such items placed in the public way. Be aware that this area may extend 5 to 10 feet or more off the actual paved road surface. You can help minimize damage by putting up roadside markers about a foot off the pavement. This helps the drivers know where the edge of pavement is during severe storms.

Departure From Policy

The Town recognizes that the conditions maybe so unusual or unexpected that a departure from these general policies should be authorized. Therefore, when conditions warrant, the Public Services Director in consultation with the Highway Superintendant or his/her designee may order a departure from these general rules when in the opinion of the Director, condition requires such action.



Last Word

Further information on snowplowing, snow removal, parking regulations and suggestions can be directed to the DPS at 508-533-3275 during normal business hours or 508-533-3221 during a snow emergency. For storm watch information concerning school or business closing, listen to local radio stations.



Questions and Complaints Received Most Often by the DPS

Q. Can I push snow from my property onto the sidewalk or street?

- A. NO. A Town bylaw restricts this act. Additionally, such action may bring liability if an accident should occur. This also increases the Towns' costs for snow operations.

Q. Do some streets receive priority during a snow storm?

- A. YES. Major roadways, school bus routes, and hills are a top priority.

Q. Does the Town really need a parking ban?

- A. YES. Snowplowing and removal are difficult; parked cars on the roadways not only increase the number of hazards, but also the time it takes to remove the snow.

Q. Do sidewalks receive the same priority as streets?

- A. NO. The roads are always plowed first. Only certain sidewalks are plowed when the storm has ended.

Q. Why is snow pushed into my driveway?

- A. The situation is unavoidable. The plows remove the snow from curb to curb for maximum clearance of the roadway. This provides for maximum drainage and public safety.

Q. Why does the Town sometimes return to plow streets days after a storm when the pavement is already bare?

A. After a large snowfall, once the roads are clear and our crews are rested, we return to “push back” the snow banks. This does two things. First, it gives us a place to put snow in case of another major snowfall so that roads can remain open and safe. Second, it opens up catch basins to allow melting snow or rainfall to move off the roadway to prevent freezing or flooding. Snow pushed into driveways during these operations will be removed if we have the time and resources to do it, however the DPS is not obligated to perform this added service.

Q. Will trash and recyclables be collected during a snow storm?

A. Normally, YES. If delayed, a notice will be posted on the Town of Medway web site (www.townofmedway.org). Those registered with Blackboard Connect (register at www.townofmedway.org) may also receive an automated call. Trash should be placed so it does not hinder the street plows or sidewalk plows. Remember, these items will most likely get covered by snow and will not be visible to snow removal operators. **Keep all bags and carts on your property or at the curb off the sidewalk.**

Q. Who determines the opening, closing or delayed opening of school during snow and ice storms?

A. The School Department.

Winter Tips

- Respect parking restrictions. Please remember that the snowplows have to navigate many narrow streets. Residents are requested to avoid parking on the street to allow the snowplow to clear the street from curb to curb. Cars that remain on the street may be plowed in, damaged by a skidding vehicle, ticketed and/or towed.
- Pay close attention to weather forecasts.
- Remember that freezing rain and wet snow create the most slippery road conditions.

- When snow, sleet or freezing rain is forecast Medway residents are urged to take precautionary measures and stay off the roadways, if possible.

****Town Bylaws and Ordinances**

- **ARTICLE XII, Penal Laws, Section 12.1**

- (a) No person shall place snow from a plow, shovel, snow blower or by any other means on the traveled portion of a public way.

This bylaw says that you can not shovel, or plow snow from your driveway into the street or on to the sidewalk. This is important and necessary to ensure safe roads and sidewalks. It also helps the DPS to reduce its cost of snow and ice operations.

NOTE: Contractors or residents can not dispose of snow on Town property without the permission of the Board of Selectmen. Please do not dump snow in the street or on the sidewalk.

- **OVERNIGHT WINTER PARKING BAN per Order of the Medway Police Department**

Beginning the last week of November, on street parking will not be permitted during the hours of 1:00 AM through 5:00 AM daily.

Residents are reminded that vehicles parked on the street during those hours will be tagged, and if such parking interferes with snow removal, they will be subject to being towed

Residents are also advised that where certain extenuating situations exist, and temporary overnight parking on the street is necessary, permission should be requested by contacting the Police Department at 533-3212, for each such occasion.

- **PARKING ON SIDEWALKS**

Parking on sidewalks is illegal and prevents clearing of snow and ice.