

City of Andover

Snow Removal and Ice Control Policy

1. Purpose and Need for Policy

The City of Andover, being a growing City, needs to annually review and adopt a policy regarding efficient and timely removal of snow and control of ice in order to best provide safe travel for the greatest number of people. This policy outlines the responsibility within the Public Works Division in order to accomplish this goal.

2. Policy

Each year the Public Works Division prepares a map of the City showing public streets, trails, and sidewalk system. The map is then divided into routes for the purpose of snow and ice control. Snow removal routes will be plowed in the most efficient and cost-effective manner. Operators will concentrate on identified higher volume streets within their routes to ensure they have provided access for emergency fire, police, and medical services.

The City, however, does not guarantee bare, dry pavement after each snowfall or that streets will be totally free of ice and snow or driving hazards common to Minnesota winter weather.

City streets will generally be plowed within 24 hours from the end of a 2" or more snowfall. This requires 10 – 12 hours of plow operations for a normal snowfall of 2" to 6". Delays may occur due to equipment breakdowns and/or extreme weather conditions.

3. Procedures

The Public Works Division along with the assistance of the Anoka County Sheriff's Department monitor street conditions. If conditions warrant attention, the Parks and Streets Operations Manager or designee will notify Public Works personnel in accordance with Public Works schedule for emergency call ins.

4. Commencement of Snow and Ice Operations

- a. Snow accumulations of 2" or more will warrant full snowplowing operations.
- b. An exception to this may be if the forecasted temperature for the day of the snowfall event is 50° F or above and the date is between March 1st and April 30th of that given year.
- c. Drifting of snow may warrant commencement of full snowplowing operations depending upon conditions.
- d. Icing of pavements may warrant full salting or sanding operations depending upon extent and conditions.

Snow and ice control operations are expensive and involve the use of limited personnel and equipment. Consequently, snowplowing operations will not generally be conducted for snowfall of less than 2 inches, unless conditions from the snow and/or icing event create hazardous travel conditions.

5. How Snow Will Be Plowed

Snow shall be plowed in a manner as to minimize any traffic obstructions. The center of the roadway will be plowed first. The snow shall be pushed from left to right, with the discharge going onto the boulevard area of the right-of-way. It is the departmental goal to have the entire street system cleaned after a “typical” snowfall in approximately 10 –12 hours from the start of plow operations. Depending on snowfall conditions, duration of the storm and equipment breakdowns, clean-up operations can fluctuate.

Snowplow operators are allowed to roll through stop signs to perform the snow removal operation. Snow at times may pile up in intersections causing site problems for vehicles. The City will come back when time permits to remove snow in these situations. This could be as long as two (2) weeks after the snow event. High volume intersections will take first priority.

6. Cul de Sac Plowing

Cul de sacs will be plowed when full snowplowing operations are warranted. (Refer to Section 4 above.) In the event of back-to-back snow events, cul de sac plowing may be held off until the end of the multiple events. The larger plow trucks will plow a loop, counterclockwise, to the outside of the cul de sacs while plowing the main portion of the streets, where possible, to keep a passable lane of traffic open. The rest of the cul de sac is plowed with a fleet of pickup trucks equipped with a front plow. The snow from the center of the cul de sac is pushed into the open areas between driveways. Space can be very limited and plow operators will push snow into any available areas they can within the right-of-way. It is not always practical to distribute the snow evenly around the cul de sac as the plows can only push snow and not scoop it and bucket it elsewhere. After they have pushed the snow out of the center, the plow will make loops around the cul de sac to push the snow as close to the curb as possible. The timing of this can either be before or after the larger street plows have been through.

Although snowplow operators plow the same on every street, certain circumstances result in some driveways getting more snow in them. Most occasions it is the first driveway on the right in a cul de sac that receives the most snow. As the plow enters a cul de sac and turns to the right, the plow picks up a wider section of snow due to the geometry of the plow angles, resulting in more snow in the first few driveways. As the plow then turns back to the left as it rounds the cul de sac, the plowed section becomes much narrower resulting in much less snow getting picked up by the plow and less snow deposited in the last few driveways in the cul de sac.

7. Timing of Plowing Operations

Timing of snow plowing will be dependent on conditions and time of day the snow event occurs. It is safest and the most efficient use of staff to commence plow operations after 1:00 am. This is due to the large amount of traffic both driving and parking on the streets during daytime hours. All attempts will be made to concentrate plowing on identified higher volume streets within their assigned routes during a daytime snow event and return overnight to fully plow streets as needed. For these reasons, and to give limited available staff required time off duty, crews will typically not plow between the hours of 5:00pm and 1:00am.

8. Granular Salt and Salt Brine. Use, Storage and Handling

The City is concerned about the effect salt has on the environment and will limit its use for that reason through the use of best management practices. Therefore, it is City policy to scrape the street surface with plows and then utilize liquid salt brine to pre-wet granular salt as it is applied to the pavement. This provides for traction and initiates melting of snow and ice on the surface of the pavement but is not intended to provide bare pavement during winter driving conditions. The salt application is generally spread down the centerline of the roadway and limited amounts in cul-de-sacs with larger concentrations at intersections, curves, steep grades, and high-volume roadways. The City cannot be responsible for damage to grass caused by the salt mixture and therefore will not make repairs or compensate residents for salt damage to turf, plantings, or trees in the street right-of-way.

When conditions are right, staff will apply salt brine to identified higher volume streets and parking lots prior to a snow and ice event as an anti-icing measure. Anti-icing treatment prior to a storm can help prevent the bond of snow and ice to the roadway surface, reducing the occurrence of hard pack snow and ice. Anti-icing is a best management practice to reduce the overall amount of salt applied to maintain safe roadways. This operation will be determined by the Parks and Streets Operations Manager or designee.

All granular salt storage will be on impervious surfaces and covered. The City of Andover will require granular salt to be covered during delivery to the Public Works facility. Plow trucks are to be loaded with granular salt on the impervious surface adjacent to the covered storage area to contain any spilled material.

9. Suspension of Operations

Generally, operations shall continue until all roads are passable. Operations will typically be suspended between the hours of 5:00 pm and 1:00 am for the safety of plow drivers and vehicles on the streets, and to allow required time off for limited available staff. Widening and clean-up operations may continue immediately or on the following workday, or for multiple days after, depending upon conditions and circumstances. The safety of employees and the public is important; therefore, plowing operations may be halted once employees have worked 14 – 16-hour shifts. Employees will be encouraged to take a 15-minute break for every 4 – 5 hours worked. Employees will be required to meet with a supervisor after 14 hours to determine if the employee can continue or if the employee should have a minimum of eight hours of off duty rest time at an appropriate location.

Depending on the extent of the storm employees from all Public Works Departments, City Hall and Community Center may be called upon to help clean up the effects of the storm. Non-union supervisory staff may also assist in the storm clean-up effort in an attempt to lend a “helping hand” and to work together with union staff as a “team”.

Operations may be suspended during periods of limited visibility. Any decision to suspend operations shall be made by the Public Works Management staff and shall be based on the conditions of the storm. The City will continue to provide access for emergency fire, police and medical services during a major snow or ice storm.

10. Stake Curbs for Snowplowing

When the streets are covered with snow, it is almost impossible for the snowplow operator to determine the edge of the road, especially curbs. Residents are encouraged to stake the edge of curbs with stakes supplied by the Public Works Division. Stakes are NOT intended to prevent snow from being pushed into the right of way. They are only to assist plow operators in determining where the edge of the road is located.

11. Work Schedule for Snowplow Operators

Snowplow operators will be expected to work eight-hour shifts. In severe snow emergencies, operators may be required to work in excess of eight-hour shifts. However, because of budget and safety concerns, no operator shall work more than a 16-hour shift in any 24-hour period. Operators shall have the option of a one-hour lunch break within every eight hours worked. After a 16-hour day, operators will be given an eight-hour rest period before returning to work. In their absence, the operator can be replaced if additional qualified personnel are available. To provide public safety and adequate service no more than 4 snowplow operators shall be allowed “approved time off” or “not available” status at the same time between November 15th and March 31st. Time off or “not available” requests will be approved per conditions outlined in the Labor Agreement. Other time-off requests may be approved if identified on the request form that they will be available for call-ins. Management has the discretion to approve additional time off or “not available” requests within 2 days of the date requested if the weather outlook is favorable.

12. Parking on City Streets

City Ordinance, Title 6 Chapter 2 prohibits parking on any City street between the hours of 1:00 a.m. and 6:00 a.m. from November 1st to April 15th or any time after a 2” snowfall in which there is no parking until the streets have been fully plowed. Parking Ordinance signs have been placed at all major thoroughfares and major arterial street intersections entering the City to help remind residents of this ordinance.

12. Placing Snow on a Public Roadway

Minnesota State Statute 160.21, 160.2715 and 169.42 prohibit depositing of snow and ice onto public roadways. Placing snow onto a public roadway can subject a person to civil liability if a road hazard, such as slippery area, frozen rut or bump occurs and causes a traffic accident.

13. Property Damage

Snow plowing and ice control operations can cause property damage even under the best of circumstances and care on the part of the City. The major types of damage are to improvements in the City right-of-way, which extends approximately 10’ to 17’ beyond the curb. The intent of the right-of-way is to provide room for snow storage, utilities, sidewalks, and other City uses. However, certain private improvements such as mailboxes are required within this area. Therefore, the City will cooperate with the property owner to determine if damage is the responsibility of the City or if the responsibility shall be that of the property owner. At the City’s discretion, we will repair a mailbox or reimburse the resident up to \$50.00 for damage for a standard mailbox and \$75.00 for a secured type mailbox. The City accepts responsibility for

mailboxes, which are allowed to be placed in the road right-of-way if the damage was caused by physical contact of a plow blade, wing or other piece of equipment. Mailboxes should be constructed to requirements, (See diagram 1 below) sturdy enough to withstand snow rolling off a plow or wing; therefore, damage resulting from the weight of snow being plowed against the mailbox is the responsibility of the resident.

Damage to fences, irrigation systems, trees or other private improvements will not be repaired or replaced by the City if they are in the right-of-way. Lawns that are scraped or gouged by City equipment will be repaired by top dressing and seeding the following spring. Residents are responsible to assist by watering these areas after being repaired.

In instances where there is disagreement as to the source of the damage and responsibility, the City shall determine the responsibility.

14. Driveways

One of the most frequent and biggest problems in snow removal from public streets is the snow deposited in driveways during plowing operations. Snow being accumulated on a plow blade has no place to go but into driveways. Plow operators make every attempt to minimize the amount of snow deposited in driveways, but amounts can still be significant. Based on liability, priorities and staffing levels, City personnel do not provide driveway clean up. Possible exceptions are at the discretion of department management in emergency situations.

15. How to Keep Your Driveway Entrance from Filling with Snow

Throughout the winter months, State, County and City snowplow crews will be out clearing highways, roads, and streets during and after each snowfall. Homeowners and other property owners will be clearing their driveways at this same time. Many times, while property owners are clearing their driveway a snowplow will go by and fill in the end of the freshly cleared driveway with snow from the street. This is not intentional, but there are ways this inconvenience can be minimized.

Diagram 2 attached shows how you can clear snow around the end of your driveway opening to reduce the possibility you will have to do more re-clearing after the snowplow goes by on the road next to your driveway. The idea is to place as much snow as possible when clearing your driveway, in the direction of travel downstream on your side of the roadway. Next is to clear an area upstream from your driveway opening to form a “pocket” for the snow from the roadway to go into instead of at the end of your driveway. The result is more of the snow accumulation from clearing the roadway will go into this open pocket area and less at the end of your driveway. A note of caution is in order; please be extremely careful when working next to the roadway, especially when snowplowing operations are in progress.

16. Mail Delivery

Snowplow operators make every effort to remove snow as close to the curb line as practical and to provide access to mailboxes for mail delivery. However, it is not possible to provide perfect conditions and minimize damage to mailboxes with the size and type of equipment the City operates. Therefore, the final cleaning adjacent to mailboxes is the responsibility of each resident. Residents are encouraged to check with the Postmaster for correct installation procedures for mailboxes.

17. Fire Hydrants

Fire hydrants are critical to minimize the potential losses involved in any fire. Residents are encouraged to assist the City by clearing hydrants near their property. If possible, they should be cleared five (5) feet on each side to allow Fire Department access.

18. Garbage/Recycling

Efficient snowplowing requires that garbage and recycling containers be accessible for pick up and be placed off the street to allow for snow removal. The containers may have to be placed in the driveway to meet both of these requirements. It is the responsibility of the resident to see that containers are not in the way of the snowplow and is also in a spot accessible for garbage and recycling trucks.

19. Sidewalk and Trails

The City is responsible for plowing snow from designated sidewalk and trail systems. This, however, does not include all sidewalks. Sidewalks and trails that are adjacent to public buildings will be cleared before the beginning of business hours. The remaining City sidewalks and trails will be plowed as soon as possible after all City streets have been plowed. Sidewalk and trail plowing will occasionally not be started until the following workday. This will be determined by the severity of the weather, personnel, and equipment. Sidewalks and trails are cleared of accumulated snow but will not be maintained to a bare pavement condition.

20. Parking Lots

The City is responsible for snow and ice removal of City facility parking lots. These facilities include:

- City Hall/Senior Center Complex
- All three Fire Stations
- Water Treatment Plant
- Andover Community Center/YMCA
- Public Works Facility
- City Park parking lots as listed: *Hawkridge Park, Hidden Creek North Park, Prairie Knoll Park, Fox Meadows Park, Kelsey Round Lake Park, Andover Station North Park, Crooked Lake Boat Landing, Lions Park, Shadowbrook Park, Wild Iris Park, City Hall Hockey, Northwoods Open Space, Maple View Park, Hidden Creek East Park, Timber River Park, Sunshine Park North Lot, and the lot on 143rd Ave and South Coon Creek Drive.*
- Driveways for 9 Sanitary Sewer Lift Stations
- Driveways for 9 City Well House Locations
- Water Tower Driveways (2)

The City does not guarantee these parking lots and driveways will be free from driving and walking hazards common to Minnesota winter weather and may be partially covered with snow and/or ice.

21. Complaints

Complaints regarding snow and ice control or damage shall be taken during normal working hours and handled in accordance with normal City operating procedures. Complaints involving access to property or problems requiring immediate attention shall be handled on a priority basis. Response time should not exceed 24-hours for most complaints. It should be understood that complaint responses are to ensure that provisions of this policy have been fulfilled and all residents of the City have been treated uniformly. It is the City's intention to log all complaints and upgrade this policy as necessary in consideration of the constraints of our resources. Please call the Public Works Division at 763-767-5178 or fill out an on-line comment at www.andovermn.gov to register a complaint.

Complaints shall be sent to the Parks and Streets Operations Manager or Streets Maintenance Leadperson. The complaint shall be documented, and a determination of fault and correction plan shall also be documented. The Manager or Leadperson will respond by e-mail or telephone on how the issue will be addressed.

22. Storm Drains

Residents are encouraged to contact the Public Works Utility Department with frozen storm drains at 763-767-5180.

