

# SNOW REMOVAL & ICE CONTROL POLICY

## 1. GENERAL POLICY:

Winter weather in northern New England is difficult to predict. There are many variables affecting winter maintenance operations such as type of precipitation, air and pavement temperature, traffic, wind, time of day and day of week.

The City of Claremont's snow removal and ice control policy has been based for many years on the goal of obtaining bare and dry pavements at the earliest practical time following cessation of a storm. It is virtually impossible to provide bare pavement during a winter storm and the City does not attempt to do so. It is the intent of the City of Claremont to provide timely, efficient, and cost effective winter maintenance, snow removal, and ice control on the roadways of the municipality for the safety and benefit of Claremont's residents, businesses, and the general motoring public.

## 2. PROCEDURE:

The objective stated above will be achieved by implementation and execution of the procedures and tasks outlined in the *City of Claremont's Winter Operations Snow Removal and Ice Control Procedures*. Due to many variables that are inherent in New England weather, each storm and/or weather event may require slightly different efforts and emphasis on any number of maintenance tasks, which together, determine the overall winter maintenance, snow removal or ice control.

## 3. LEVEL OF SERVICES:

It is difficult to maintain the snow/black ice on roads and sidewalks during a storm. It is the intention of the City of Claremont to provide practical, safe access to homes, businesses and municipal facilities during a winter storm within the confines of budget limitations.

The "DPW Director or his/her designee" shall generally keep themselves apprised of changing weather conditions. However, the City of Claremont's Department of Public Works relies heavily on the observations of the Claremont Police Department personnel and various other sources to alert them to road conditions.

The "DPW Director or his/her designee" will decide when to begin snow or ice control operations. The criteria for that decision are:

- A. Total snow accumulation of approximately two (2) inches or more;
- B. Drifting of snow that causes problems for travel;
- C. Icy conditions which seriously affect travel; and
- D. Time of snow in relationship to heavy use of streets.

Generally, operations will continue until all roads are passable. Widening and cleanup operations may continue immediately or on the following work day depending on conditions and circumstances. Safety of the plow operators and the public is important. Therefore, snow plowing/removal operations may be terminated after a period of time to allow personnel adequate rest. There may be instances when this is not possible depending on storm conditions and other circumstances. Operations may also be suspended during times of limited visibility, significant winds or severe cold for employee safety and equipment preservation. Any decision to suspend operations shall be made by the "DPW Director or his/her designee" based on the conditions of the storm. The City will provide access for emergency fire, police and medical services on an "as-needed" basis during the major snow or ice storm.

#### **4. COMMAND:**

Direction of all winter maintenance activities for the City of Claremont is vested with the Director of Public Works or his/her designee.

The outlined policy is intended to serve as the normal operation procedures for the winter maintenance, snow removal and/or ice control for the City of Claremont.

## **5. PRIORITIES AND SCHEDULE FOR WHICH STREETS WILL BE PLOWED:**

The City of Claremont maintains approximately (144) miles of road. Of that number (39) miles are gravel roads. The City has classified City streets based on function, traffic volume, and importance to the welfare of the community. Routes will be plowed in the most cost effective and timely manner. Those streets classified as Priority #1 will be plowed first. These are high volume routes which connect major sections of the City and provide access for emergency fire, police, and medical services.

Priority #2 streets are those streets providing access to schools and commercial businesses.

When steep hills or other safety concerns exist, a street may be advanced to a higher priority for plowing. For operating efficiency some lower priority streets may be done when equipment is in the area rather than returning later. This will vary by storm severity.

Priority #3 streets are low volume residential streets.

Priority #4 areas are alleys and City parking lots.

One or more of the following, which may delay or prevent the implementation of this policy, may affect any part of or all of this policy:

- Equipment breakdown
- Snow accumulation in excess of 1 inch per hour
- Traffic congestion
- Emergencies
- Illness or absences of personnel
- Budget constraints
- Extensive operations with an exhausted crew

## **6. ROUTES**

Currently, the City of Claremont is divided into (17) plow routes and (17) treatment routes. As noted above, there are a total of (144) miles of roads in the City of Claremont (288 lane miles) which includes (39) miles of gravel roads. City roads not maintained in the winter include Class VI roads. In good weather conditions it will take 4-6 hours to complete a plow route.

## **7. SNOW REMOVAL:**

Responsible City personnel will determine when snow will be removed by truck from the area. Such snow removal will occur in areas where there is no room on the street for snow storage and in areas where accumulated piles of snow create a hazardous condition. Snow removal operations will not commence until other snowplowing operations have been completed. Snow removal operations may also be delayed depending on weather conditions, personnel and budget availability. The snow will be removed and hauled to a snow storage area. The snow storage area will be located so as to minimize environmental problems.

## **8 MATERIALS:**

The Department of Public Works uses approximately (2,300) tons of salt and (4,600) cubic yards of sand each season. The sand is used as an abrasive for paved and gravel roads and applied to improve the public's motor vehicle traction. On paved roads salt is spread to create liquid salt brine. The Department employs salt as a de-icing agent. Unless weather conditions require a different approach, winter maintenance routes are routinely treated with salt on high traffic areas and sand or salt/sand mix on all other roads. When salting paved roads, we typically treat @ approximately (300) lbs. per lane mile. Sand is spread at a higher ratio of (750) to (1,000) lbs. per lane mile when needed. When salt is applied it creates brine on the road surface that reduces snow compaction on the paved roads. The road crown and the vehicular traffic further assist with the distribution of the brine. Salt becomes less effective as the temperature drops.

The City uses sand during extreme cold temperatures (once it drops below 15-18 degrees Fahrenheit on all roads). During extreme cold, the City will only use sand and only where needed. Our sand is mixed with salt in a ratio of 20/1 (20 parts sand to one part of salt). This helps prevent the sand from freezing in the spreaders of the trucks and in the sand stock pile. During extreme sub-zero temperatures even this mixture will freeze.

Our sand supply is bid out every (2) years. Following bid requirements and award, the sand is trucked into our storage facilities throughout the winter season, as needed. Rock salt is purchased through a supplier, as needed, at State bid price, and is trucked into our storage facilities throughout the winter season by the supplier.

## **9 FROZEN PRECIPITATION**

Frozen precipitation including sleet and the build-up of ice caused by freezing rain are special situations, and not subject to procedures indicated above. When a changeover from snow or sleet to freezing rain is predicted or anticipated, snow and/or sleet is left on the pavement to capture the freezing rain thereby preventing a glare ice situation, which without question is the most treacherous condition that occurs on roads. Treatment includes application of salt at a rate of (300) pounds per lane mile as needed throughout the storm. Heavy rain tends to wash off applied salt or sand, making it difficult to keep the pavement ice-free.

## **10. COMMUNICATION**

The Highway Department's rolling stock is equipped with two-way radios capable of transmitting and receiving. Every employee is assigned a unit number. Communication equipment used by the Police, Fire and Highway Department allow for communications between departments.

## **11. SCHOOLS**

The Highway Department is NOT responsible for the clearing of snow or for winter maintenance or treatment of the district school's access roads and parking lots; this is done by private contract under the administration of the School District. However, on days when schools are in session, our winter maintenance efforts on our City roads must be timed to coincide with bus routing and delivery.

During a winter snow event, the Superintendent of Schools calls the Director of Public Works or his/her designee and requests information about the road conditions. The Director of Public Works or his/her designee relates the information relative to the conditions of the City roads and the Superintendent of Schools then makes the decision whether to close or to delay the opening of schools.

## **12. WINTER PARKING BAN**

The City of Claremont has an Ordinance # 247, which enacts a winter parking ban every year from November 1<sup>st</sup> to April 15<sup>th</sup> from Midnight through 7:00 AM. This ban prohibits parking in or on any City road. Any vehicle so parked as to obstruct such snow plowing and/or snow removal operation may be towed by the City at the owner's expense. The purpose of this winter parking ban is to allow winter maintenance crews unobstructed snow removal and ice control routes as much as possible and to maintain the maximum effectiveness of their efforts. The penalty is a fine for each violation.

## **13. PLACING OF SNOW**

The placing of snow on the road surface of any public roads within the City of Claremont is prohibited. Pursuant to RSA 236:20, any person who shall place or cause to be placed, any snow or ice, upon the surface of any Class IV or Class V highway or road shall be subject to a fine and reimbursement to the City for any

expense incurred in the clean up or said violation. In addition, Section 16-5 of the *Claremont Municipal Code* (as explained in Ordinance #355) notes the following;

*No person shall put or place, or cause to be put or placed, snow or ice upon the surface of the sidewalks within the City or the travelled portion of any Class IV or Class V highway or City maintained portion of any Class II highway, except as provided in this section.*

*No person shall purposely or knowingly put or place, or cause to be put or placed, any snow, ice or other debris which covers a fire hydrant so as to make it inaccessible for immediate use in the event of a fire.*

*The police department shall have the responsibility for enforcing this section.*

*Any person who violates the provisions of this section shall be guilty of a violation.*

#### **14. SOLID WASTE TRANSFER STATION/RECYCLING CENTER**

If the facility is open to the public during a snow or ice storm, personnel will plow/shovel/snow blow the area prior to opening for public use. All public areas shall be kept as clear as possible to provide as safe as an access that is reasonably possible. Sand and other slip resistant materials shall be used in public areas. It will often not be possible to maintain a clear ground, but a reasonable effort will be made during storms.

#### **15. SIDEWALK SNOW REMOVAL**

Sidewalk snow plowing will be done at the end of the snow or ice event, within the limitations of manpower, equipment and storm size. If there are insufficient personnel available to conduct sidewalk snow removal operations, as well as street and road clearance, the street and roads will take priority. During a large storm event, it could take more than a day after the storm to open them up for pedestrians.

## 16. DAMAGE TO PRIVATE PROPERTY:

It should be noted that the municipality is not held responsible for damages to any private property that is located within the City's right-of-way (ROW). In most cases, the ROW extends 5-20 feet on either side of the paved or gravel road but most often property owners are confused and consider this their own property. Homeowners cultivate extensions with lawns, mailboxes, fences or stone walls within the ROW area, which may improve the appearance of their property or the street; but it is obstructive to a good maintenance operation being conducted on the roadway.

Homeowners should not put bark mulch, crushed rock, stone walls, fences (visible and invisible), irrigation systems, trees, lawns, or plantings in the ROW. The City is not liable for any damage that may occur to property within its ROW. Many items interfere with heavy equipment and can become a hazard for vehicles and pedestrians. They often cause drainage failures and thereby road deterioration.

The City may, following an investigation, repair lawn damage which is extreme and beyond the normal winter maintenance of roads. Note: if lawns along the roadside are higher than the roads, residents must understand it is very difficult to prevent lawn damage.

Occasionally mailboxes or other devices are damaged by snow plowing operations due to poor visibility. They are sometimes buried in a snow bank. This damage is not deliberate and in most cases unavoidable. The City of Claremont does not repair, replace or re-erect boxes that are located within the ROW. The City will however, after investigation, repair/replace any mailbox damaged inadvertently by City personnel. If these devices are located within the highway limits they are the responsibility of the property owner. The Department of Public Works will work with the box owner to locate the box in the safest possible location and offer advice on its design to minimize potential damage.

## **17. DRIVEWAYS:**

One of the most frequent and irritable problems in the snow removal from public streets, is the snow deposited in driveways during plowing operations. Snow being accumulated on the plow blade has no place to go but in the driveway. The driver's make every attempt to minimize the amount of snow deposited in driveways, but the amount can still be significant. Based on priorities and staffing level, City personnel do not provide driveway cleaning. Possible exceptions are at the discretion of the supervisor for emergency situations.

## **18. WIDENING OR PUSHING BACK OF SNOW BANKS:**

Following storms with heavy snowfall or when several storms result in substantial snow bankings, the City of Claremont will undertake a roadway widening procedure, which will push back the snow banks. This is a necessary operation because it accomplishes the following:

- Provides room for future snow storage.
- Reduces or prevents melted snow from running out onto the roadway pavement and creating icing conditions.
- Increases safe sight distance at intersections and driveways.
- Maintains a uniform line by eliminating protrusions at driveways and intersections.

Unfortunately, there is no way to prevent depositing snow in previously cleaned driveways or walkways except to leave a hazardous projecting mound of snow. With thousands of driveways of all sizes and descriptions along the road system it is impossible to clear these individual drives as the cost would be prohibitive and would probably result in complaints of highway funds expended for the benefit of certain individuals.

## 19. RESIDENT COOPERATION:

Please be reminded for public safety purposes that highway personnel are out on the roadways. During extreme road and weather conditions resident cooperation is sincerely appreciated during this time. Please don't travel the roadways during heaviest cleanup efforts if at all possible and adhere to the City's enforced parking restrictions.

We would like to remind everyone to use extreme caution around the plow trucks and to utilize the information below:

- Please make sure you are at a safe distance when pulling out in front of a plow truck. Our trucks can weigh in excess of (15) tons and require a longer than normal stopping distance on slick pavement.
- When following a plow, allow plenty of stopping distance (preferably 300'). Plow trucks make frequent stops and back up with little warning. Remember, if you cannot see a plow truck's side view mirror, the driver cannot see you.
- When meeting a plow truck, please slow down and give the operator plenty of room.
- Remain at a safe distance from truck while they are treating the roads. Rock salt and sand are our main defense against slick pavement and our plows are capable of spreading these in a (20) foot pattern behind the vehicle. We do use shielding to deflect this pattern, so please give plenty of room during these operations.
- Please do not pass plow trucks. Please take a few minutes and allow us to clear your path.

## 20. COMPLAINTS:

Complaints regarding snow and ice control or damage shall be taken during normal working hours and handled in accordance with the City's complaint 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 any complaint. It should be understood that complaint responses are to ensure that the provision of this policy have been fulfilled and that 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 constraints of our resources.