

City of Scandia, Minnesota
Snowplowing and Ice Control Policy
Adopted February 15, 2011
Amended April 15, 2014
Amended February 21, 2017

1. Introduction

The city of Scandia, Minnesota, finds that it is in the best interest of the residents of the city to assume basic responsibility for control of snow and ice on city streets. Reasonable ice and snow control is necessary for routine travel and emergency services. The city will attempt to provide such control in a safe and cost effective manner, keeping in mind safety, budget, personnel, and environmental concerns. The city will use city employees, equipment and/or private contractors to provide this service.

This policy does not relieve the operator of private vehicles, pedestrians, property owners, residents and all others that may be using public streets, of their responsibility to act in a reasonable, prudent and cautious manner, given the prevailing street conditions.

2. When will city start snow or ice control operations?

The Maintenance Supervisor will decide when to begin snow or ice control operations. The criteria for that decision are:

- A. Snow accumulation of 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 snowfall in relationship to heavy use of streets.

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 two (2) inches, and will typically not be commenced until the snowfall has stopped.

Between major snow events, snow and ice removal will continue during regular work shifts subject to the availability of personnel and equipment.

3. How snow will be plowed

Snow will be plowed in a manner so as to minimize traffic obstructions. The center of the roadway will be plowed first. The snow shall then be pushed from left to right on two-way streets. The discharge shall go onto the boulevard area or ditch of the street. Wing plows will be used to clear roads to their full width unless conditions dictate otherwise. Snow on cul-de-sacs may be plowed to the center in an attempt to provide the largest turning radius possible for emergency vehicle ingress and egress. When a plow goes on a bridge, the driver shall slow down so snow does not go over the bridge, if possible. In times of extreme snowfall, streets will not always immediately be able to be completely cleared of snow. The city will not assure a completely bare roadway. The city will endeavor to make all roads passable within a reasonable amount of time after snowfall has stopped.

4. Snow Removal

The Maintenance Supervisor will determine if and when snow will be removed from the area by truck. Such snow removal will occur in areas where there is no room on the boulevard 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.

5. Priorities and schedule of streets to be plowed

The Maintenance Supervisor has the responsibility for determining plow routes and sequences of operations in accordance with established priorities and the most efficient use of personnel, equipment and fuel.

During significant and severe storms or when resources are limited, regular plow routes and sequences of operations may be altered. Resources may be shifted to priority routes to keep them safe and passable, and plowing of all other streets may be stopped, at the discretion of the Maintenance Supervisor.

The city has classified city streets based on the street function, traffic volume and importance to the welfare of the community. Those streets classified as “collectors” by the Comprehensive Plan will be plowed first. These are higher volume routes, which connect major sections of the city and provide access for emergency fire, police, and medical services. The second priority streets are local, non-collector streets providing access to schools and commercial businesses. The third priority streets are low volume residential streets. The fourth priority areas are city parking lots, except as needed to maintain access for emergency vehicles in which case plowing will have top priority. The lowest priority is sidewalks.

Unforeseeable circumstances may cause delays in completing plow routes. Such circumstances may include weather conditions that endanger the safety of snowplow operators and/or safe and effective operation of equipment, commuter traffic, disabled vehicles, poor visibility conditions, parked cars along streets, assistance to emergency response vehicles, equipment breakdown, and personnel shortages.

6. Work schedule for snowplow operators

Snowplow operators will be expected to work eight-hour shifts. In severe snow emergencies, operators sometimes have to work in excess of eight-hour shifts. However, because of budget and safety concerns, no operator shall work more than a twelve-hour shift. After a twelve-hour shift, the operators will be replaced if additional qualified personnel are available. No operator shall begin a new shift until eight hours or more have passed since the completion of their last shift.

7. Traffic regulations

The city recognizes that snowplow operators are exempt from traffic regulations set forth in Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 169 while actually engaged in work on streets, except for regulations related to driving while impaired and the safety of school children. Pursuant to this authority, snowplow operators engaged in snow removal or ice control on city streets

have discretion to disregard traffic laws set forth in Chapter 169, except for laws relating to impaired driving and school children safety, when in their judgment, it is safe to disregard such laws. The privileges granted herein to operators of snow removal and ice control vehicles shall apply only if the vehicle is equipped with one lighted lamp displaying a flashing, oscillating, or rotating amber light placed in such a position on the vehicle as to be visible throughout an arc of 360 degrees.

8. Weather conditions

Snow and ice control operations will be conducted only when weather conditions do not endanger the safety of snowplow operators and equipment. Factors that may delay or suspend snow and ice control operations include: severe cold, significant winds, and limited visibility.

9. Use of sand, salt, and other chemicals

The city will use sand, salt, and other chemicals when there are hazardous ice or slippery conditions. The city is concerned about the cost and the effect of such chemicals on the environment and will limit its use for those reasons. The city will not be responsible for damages to any turf or personal property caused by the application of salt or other chemicals.

10. Sidewalks

The City recognizes that all of the sidewalks in the City are located on County roads, that snowplowing of these roads may deposit snow and ice on the sidewalks, and that the width of the boulevards are not sufficiently wide to avoid such snow deposits from plowing. While it is primarily the responsibility of the resident and/or property owner to remove all accumulated ice and snow from sidewalks along public streets adjoining their property, the City will plow snow from these sidewalks after the streets have been plowed.

11. Mailboxes and personal property in rights-of way

Snow plow operators will make every effort to remove snow so as to provide access to mailboxes for the Postal Service. 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.

Coming into contact with a mailbox is a common obstacle snowplow operators face during storm activities. The city will conduct a review of each mailbox incident to determine whether the city will replace or provide reimbursement for the mailbox. Only mailboxes that were properly installed and located, which were damaged by physical contact with city equipment will be the responsibility of the city. The city will not be responsible for damage to mailboxes or support posts caused by snow or ice coming into contact with the mailbox.

If the city is responsible for damage to a mailbox, the city will replace the mailbox with a standard size, non-decorative metal mailbox and replace the support post as necessary with a metal swing-arm style support post, both installed by the city. The city will not reimburse the mailbox owner for the replacement of the mailbox and post by others. The Public Works Department may provide a recommended design for mailbox supports and promote its use by city residents to reduce damage from snowplowing operations.

The city will not be liable for damage to fences, sprinklers, signs, trees, shrubs, landscape materials, lighting, decorative items or any other objects placed in the public right-of-way.

Except as otherwise provided in any license or franchise agreement, the city will only be responsible for damage to utility pedestals and transformers within the right-of-way resulting from direct contact by City snow and ice removal equipment. City liability shall be limited to actual costs to repair the damages as documented by invoices submitted to the City by the utility.

12. Driveways and Parking

Snow plow operators will make an effort to avoid depositing snow in private driveways, but snow accumulated on the plow blade has no place to go except the edge of the road including driveways. City personnel will not provide driveway cleaning. Any exception shall be at the discretion of the Maintenance Supervisor for emergency situations only. It is unlawful for property owners to plow snow from driveways and sidewalks onto or across public roads. Piles of snow left on the road can freeze into a solid mass creating a hazardous situation for vehicles and snowplows.

City ordinances require that any parked vehicle interfering with the removal of snow and ice shall be removed by their owners within 15 minutes of demand made by a city employee. After such notice it is unlawful to park on the street until the snow removal operation is completed. No vehicle shall be left standing or parked for more than 60 minutes between 2:00 a.m. and 6:00 a.m. on any city street. Public works employees will coordinate notification and enforcement efforts with office personnel and police as available and appropriate.

13. Complaint procedure

Complaints, including the full name and address of the complainant will be recorded on telephone logs and forwarded to the appropriate personnel. Residents are encouraged to report information on road conditions. Emergency complaints will be handled in an expeditious manner as resources are available.

14. Deviation from policy

The Maintenance Supervisor may deviate from this policy when in his or her judgment it is in the best interest of the city. Changes in priorities will be documented as to what caused such actions, why the change was necessary, and for how long the change is to be in effect.

15. Review and modification of policy

The Maintenance Supervisor shall keep on file all comments and complaints received regarding this policy. The policy will be reviewed periodically. Any review will consider comments and complaints since the last review and any other factors affecting the policy or its implementation.