

Snow Removal Operations Policies and Procedures

Introduction

Reasonable ice and snow control is necessary for Public Safety, Routine Travel and Emergency Services. The Town of Wausau strives to maintain safe conditions; however, this is not an absolute “bare pavement” policy. Drivers are expected to practice safe winter driving practices when traveling town roads.

The Town may use town employees and equipment, seasonal employees, and/or private contractors to provide snowplowing and ice control services.

Local and national weather services, the Marathon County Highway and Sheriff Departments and general observation will be used to determine when to initiate the snow plowing operation.

While we cannot provide round-the-clock snow plowing operations, every effort is made to complete snow plowing operations as quickly and safely as possible.

Snow Plowing Policy

This policy sets general guidelines, but the policy must remain flexible and take into consideration variable conditions such as wind, extreme temperatures, timing, duration, and moisture content.

Snow or ice control operations are based on the following criteria:

1. Snow accumulation of 2 inches or more.
2. Drifting snow that causes problems for travel.
3. Ice conditions that seriously affect travel.

Snow and ice treatment begins once streets become hazardous. Different storm situations and severity levels will determine starting times of road crew. The full road crew, including seasonal employees will be used when the above conditions exist.

For example: If the storm ends in late evening or early morning hours, road crews may be called in at 2:00 AM to begin clearing roads for the morning rush hour.

During blizzard or high wind storms, only essential plowing will be conducted until the storm subsides.

Prioritizing Roads

The town roads will be plowed in the following order

Priority 1- Roads with highest traffic volume – Evergreen Road & McIntosh

Priority 2- Collecting Roads – Roads that lead to State Highways, County Roads or Priority 1 Roads

Priority 3- * Residential Streets, ** Dead Ends, and cul-de-sacs

* Where steep hills or other safety concerns exist, a street may be advanced to a higher priority for plowing and/or sanding.

** For operating efficiency some lower priority streets (ex: Dead Ends) will be done when equipment is in the area rather than doubling back at a later time.

When **heavy** snows are occurring during peak travel times, roads with the highest traffic volume will be plowed more frequently. Secondary streets (collectors) will be plowed as often as possible. Low volume residential streets may not be plowed until storm abates.

Use of Salt and Sand

To The Town will use sand and salt when there are hazardous or slippery conditions.

According to the Town Sanding Policy; hills, curves, intersections, shaded areas and icy areas will be sanded and salted as needed.

Business, Public and Private Parking Lots and Driveways

Business, Public and Private Property owners are responsible for plowing and/or sanding their parking lots and driveways. In accordance with a Wisconsin Supreme Court ruling, the Town may not provide snow removal or sanding services to businesses or public parking lots.

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For Town Residents only - If no other option is available, town residents may contract with the Town of Wausau to have private driveways plowed for a fee that fully reimburses the Town for all costs incurred.

Placement of Snow on Public Property, Right-of-ways, or Obstructing Views

In accordance with State Law and the Town of Wausau Ordinances, it is unlawful for any person to push snow or ice into or across the street. Property owners who violate this section will be required to remove the improperly placed snow, or pay the costs if the Town does the work.

Property Damage

The Town recognizes that on occasion private property is damaged during snow and ice control operations. Where this happens, it will be the policy of the Town to handle damages in the following manner:

1. Mailboxes: It shall be the responsibility of the property owner to maintain access to mailboxes so mail can be delivered.

A Town Board Member, or designee, shall investigate complaints of damage. If evidence indicates that physical contact occurred between the plow and the mailbox, the Town may assume responsibility for repair. Where evidence indicates that snow caused damage to the mailbox, the homeowner will assume responsibility for the repair.

2. Driveway Aprons. Damage caused to driveway aprons will not be repaired unless authorized by the Town Board.

3. Fences and other encroachments: If it is determined that damage to private property was caused by Town snow plowing operations, the repair or replacement of damages may be approved by the Town Board. It will be the Town's discretion as to doing the work or having the property owner supply an estimate; the owner must present an invoice confirming repair is complete before payment will be made. * No damages to fences located closer than eight (8) feet to the public right-of-way will be covered by the Town. The Town will not repair private Landscaping -including nursery and inanimate materials that are installed or encroach on Town owned right-of-way.

4. Cars, vehicles, and trailers. Any vehicle or trailer damaged by snow plowing operations due to illegal parking (in violation of the Town's Snow Parking Ordinance) shall be the owner's responsibility.

Commercial Operators

Operators of private snow removal services not hired by the Town, but operating within the Town limits, shall completely clean all snow pushed onto the Town streets and be liable for all damages caused to Town or Private property.

Parking Restrictions during Snow Months

Restricted snow parking shall be in effect when existing weather conditions could severely impede vehicular traffic or snow and ice removal operations in the Town. Illegally parked vehicles shall be responsible for damage including but not limited to, damage to Town vehicles, public property and injury or harm to employees of the Town of Wausau.

Complaints

Complaints regarding snow or ice removal operations should be directed to the Town Road Supervisor or Town Board. The location and nature of the complaint will be reviewed and an appropriate response will be made.