

CITY OF ARDEN HILLS
SNOWPLOWING, SNOW REMOVAL AND ICE CONTROL POLICY

1. DETERMINATION OF NEED AND INTRODUCTIONS

The City of Arden Hills has determined that it is in the best interest of the residents, for the City to assume basic responsibility for control of snow and ice on the streets under the jurisdiction of the City. Appropriate snow and ice control is necessary for emergency services as well as routine travel. Providing this service in a cost-effective manner is a discretionary decision of the City Council. The City will use City employees, equipment and/or contract services as deemed appropriate to provide this service. Therefore, this policy is needed to provide direction for these operations and guidelines for employees and residents based upon available resources.

The City of Arden Hills has approximately thirty (30) miles of street under its jurisdiction. These consist of State Aid roads and residential streets. This policy is intended to provide guidelines for snow and ice control operations for streets under the City's jurisdiction. Some sidewalks are also covered under this policy.

2. COMMENCEMENT OF OPERATIONS

Snowplowing and/or ice control operations shall commence under the direction of the Public Works Director. In his absence, the Public Works Superintendent will determine when and what operations will begin.

If there is sufficient notice of an upcoming storm, crews will apply salt brine at intersections, hills, and curves on dry pavement in advance of the storm. Salt brine has been found to be more effective, longer lasting, and more environmentally friendly than conventional road salt.

It is policy to begin snowplowing operations after the snowstorm has subsided. The call out of equipment is dependent upon time and severity of the snowfall. The most critical times are morning and evening rush hour periods.

This policy is designated, if feasible, to have the snow removed prior to the beginning of these rush hour periods. If a storm is forecast to be unusually long, or heavy accumulations appear imminent, full snowplowing operations will begin on all of the snowplow routes when accumulations become hazardous for driving. Based on different storm situations and severity levels, the starting time frames are flexible. The following guidelines may also warrant the beginning of the operations.

- A. Snow accumulation of two inches, with continued snowfall.
- B. Drifting of snow may warrant commencement of partial or full operations depending upon conditions.

- C. Icing of pavements may also warrant partial or full plowing operation depending upon extent and conditions, and in support of reducing the annual volume of chlorides being introduced into the environment.
- D. The Public Works Director or his designated representative shall determine the time to start operations and the extent of the operations. Storms forecast for late afternoon or evening hours may be the basis for the Public Works Director splitting a shift and sending crews home for call-out later in the evening.

3. SUSPENSION OF OPERATIONS

Operations shall continue until all roads are passable. Widening and clean-up operations may continue immediately or on the following working day, depending upon conditions and circumstances. Safety of the plow operators and the public is important. Therefore, snowplowing/removal operations may be terminated after ten to twelve hours to allow personnel adequate time to rest. There may be instances when this is not possible, depending on storm conditions and other circumstances. Operations may also be suspended during periods of limited or zero visibility. Any decision to suspend operations shall be made by the Public Works Director, or his designee, and shall be based on the conditions of the storm.

In the event that the driver gets stuck in snow or breaks down, another unit will be summoned to replace or rescue the disabled unit. The safety of the drivers will be of prime importance. If the City should experience equipment breakdown, attempts will be made to engage contract units or other municipalities to supplement our work force or equipment fleet.

4. PLOW ROUTES AND SEQUENCING

City streets, public sidewalks, trails, public parking lots, and ice rinks under the City's jurisdiction are affected by this policy. All private sidewalks shall be maintained by the property owner. City parking lots and ice rinks shall be cleared by the City crews, but as a secondary priority. At the City's discretion, they shall either be cleared in conjunction with street routes or after street routes have been completed.

The Public Works Director shall have the responsibility of determining plow routes and sequencing operations. The Public Works Director shall retain the latitude to adjust sequencing or route assignments based on storm conditions, equipment availability and/or other conditions warranting changes. Currently, the City has been divided into three different plow routes, with one snowplow assigned to each.

5. LEVELS OF SERVICE

The intent of this policy is to provide safe winter driving conditions appropriate for the type of travel typical to City streets. The level of service described herein shall be considered a guideline with the understanding that immediately after a storm, the level of service provided may be less than described herein and may vary across the City, depending on storm conditions and other circumstances. Streets shall be plowed and/or salted, with additional emphasis given to intersection approaches and curves, in order to provide the safest conditions practical under the circumstances.

Snow shall be plowed in a manner that will not obstruct traffic flow on a normal basis. The center of the roadway will be plowed first. The snow will be pushed from the center-line. The discharge shall go onto the boulevard area of the street. There is no practical method for the City to prevent snow from filling the end of driveways as the plow passes by.

Salting may occur while plowing depending on the conditions. Generally intersections, hills, high traffic areas, and curves are salted during plowing. If severe ice conditions exist, salt applications may be more widespread.

Salt is purchased from Ramsey County. It is loaded by Ramsey County operators that measure tonnage via scales on the loader or by an average bucket volume basis. Excess salt returned to storage is estimated and recorded by the plow operator.

The City of Arden Hills does not have a dry pavement policy so those using City maintained rights-of-way are expected to exercise careful judgment and caution during winter months.

During light to normal snowfalls, streets shall be plowed to full width as soon after the initial pass as practical. During heavier snowfalls, the streets shall be plowed as wide as possible initially and widened as the storm intensity lessens. After the storm subsides, clean-up operations shall begin in order to clear intersections and snow storage areas along corners and boulevards. It is the City's intent to complete the initial plowing and salting operations within twenty-four (24) hours of light snowfalls and within seventy-two (72) hours of heavy snowfalls. Major winter weather events may require more time.

6. PARKING RESTRICTIONS

On-street parking is not compatible with efficient snowplowing operations. Vehicles left parked on the street for extended periods of time created significant operational problems for snowplow operators as well as safety problems due to packed snow and ice remaining on the roadway around the vehicle. The City's Ordinance prohibit parking of vehicles on City streets after the accumulation of two inches or more of snow, with the prohibition continuing until snow removal or plowing thereof has been completed. Any vehicle parked in violation of this Ordinance is subject to a parking citation and is also declared to be a safety hazard and nuisance. This nuisance may be summarily abated by removing and towing away such vehicle under the direction of the Ramsey County Sheriff's Department. Enforcement of this Ordinance shall be directed by the City Council.

7. SNOW REMOVAL

Certain locations within our community may require additional service after snowplowing operations cease. This shall be referred to as "snow removal". Snow removal hereinafter will be defined as the loading and trucking of snow to an approved site under the direction of the Public Works Director or his designated representative. This service may be provided when there is no area for snow storage. Snow removal operations normally begin within twenty-four (24) hours after snowplowing operations have been completed.

There are approximately sixty (60) cul-de-sacs in Arden Hills. It may take some time for the specialized equipment to complete the actual cul-de-sac areas; therefore, a snowplow may complete the normal part of the street and complete only a portion of the cul-de-sac.

The major portion of the cul-de-sac will be plowed by the special equipment during the usual time guidelines for snowplowing operations. Snow removal may be required in cul-de-sac areas if previous snow accumulations prevent normal movement of snow to boulevard areas.

8. SNOW REMOVAL FOR CITY SIDEWALKS AND TRAILS

The city of Arden Hills does maintain most sidewalks and trails within City property and right-of-way. Arden Hills sidewalk snow plowing begins after a significant snowfall. The City will maintain sidewalks and trails only after all City streets have been plowed. Sidewalks and trails that are maintained by the City during the winter months will be cleared of accumulated snow, but will not be maintained to a “clean pavement” condition. The following sidewalk and trail areas will not be maintained by the City’s Public Works Department in the winter months due to steep grades or dangerous sidewalk conditions.

- Arden View Drive to Colleen Avenue Trail
- Cummings Park – Lexington Avenue to Cummings Ball Field
- Cummings Park – North Water Tower to Hamline Avenue

The City of Arden Hills will post the aforementioned trail locations as “Minimal Maintenance Trails” during the winter months. The City does not maintain unpaved trail segments during the winter months.

Special priority is given to school routes along a few sidewalks and trails. All efforts will be made to clear the following sidewalks/trails by 7:00 AM.

- Trail along County Road E2
- Trail from Venus Avenue to County Road E2
- Trail along Lake Valentine Road

9. PROPERTY DAMAGE

Snowplowing and ice control operations may cause property damage even under the best of circumstances and care on the part of the operator. The major types of damage are to improvements within the City right-of-way, which extends approximately ten to fifteen feet beyond the curb locations. The intent of the right-of-way is to provide room for snow storage, utilities, boulevard trees, sidewalks and other City uses.

The City will repair sod that was damaged by a City snowplow. Public Works Department staff members will repair the sod damage with black dirt and grass seed. All other damage within the public right-of-way is the responsibility of the property owner including, but not limited to, trees, shrubs, landscaping materials, decorative rock, brick walls, and lawn/landscaping irrigation (sprinkler heads) systems.

The City will not repair/replace sod damage due to the application of sand, salt, or other deicing chemicals.

Certain private improvements such as mailboxes are required within City right-of-way. Therefore, the City will cooperate with property owners in the event of damaged private property. The City shall specify when this damage is the responsibility of the City and when it shall be the responsibility of the resident.

Mailboxes and supports are the property of the mail route patron and must be installed and maintained by their owner, who must bear the liability for them. Since mailboxes must be located in the road right-of-way in order to be accessed by postal service, certain regulations apply for the safety of the driving public as well as for the protection of the mailboxes themselves.

Federal postal regulations require the mailbox patron to remove any obstructions, including snow, which make delivery difficult. Using one of the approved mailbox supports is highly recommended, as it will allow clearing under or near the mailbox without damage during a normal plowing operation.

When there is a heavy accumulation of snow, the location of mailboxes close to the roadway makes the push back operations of the City's Public Works staff difficult and renders the boxes quite susceptible to damage as a result of plowing operations. It shall be the City's policy to use special care and consideration when plowing snow in the vicinity of mailboxes.

State law now requires all mailbox supports be of a breakaway design.

Mailboxes can be especially vulnerable to damage from snow removal operations. The City assumes liability for mailboxes damaged during plowing if it is determined that the plow made direct contact with a mailbox that was properly placed and of an approved installation.

To be properly placed, a mailbox should be installed so its bottom edge is 45" to 48" above street level, with the post 48" back from the curb or front of the box. That amount of clearance is necessary to keep the plow's wing from hitting the box. If there are any plastic newspaper tubes attached to the mailbox, they must also be above the minimum 45" height requirement. The box's post should be securely in the ground.

The responsibility for repairing mailbox damage lies with the homeowner, not the City, if mailboxes are not installed with the clearance mentioned above or damage is the result of snow impact and not direct contact by a City plow. The City will replace mailboxes damaged from direct contact by a City plow with a standard metal mailbox installed on an approved swing-away post (roadways with posted speed limit of 40 mph or greater) or a 4 x 4 wooden post (roadways with posted speed limits under 40 mph). Alternatively, the City will provide a maximum reimbursement of up to eighty dollars (\$80.00) in compensation if the owner prefers to repair their mailbox. The City WILL NOT pay for the replacement cost of decorative or custom mailboxes.

10. RESPONSIBILITY OF RESIDENTS

Snowstorms create numerous problems and inconveniences. This policy has identified streets, sidewalks, parking lots and ice rinks that the City will clear. The residents will also have certain responsibilities. These include clearing their own driveways and private sidewalks, clearing areas for refuse containers, clearing around mailboxes and/or newspaper tubes and fire hydrants adjacent to or located upon their property. These areas must be cleared without depositing any snow into the street. The practice of moving snow from driveways into the street causes a very serious traffic problem. When the snow freezes and a vehicle hits a rough spot, it could be thrown out of control and an accident might occur. It is prohibited to blow, shovel or plow any snow back onto, or across any City street. Snow must not be accumulated into any large piles that obstruct vision or driveways or walks. Refuse containers must not be placed on the street surfaces. The City will not clear private drives or walks.

Snowplowing can cause additional snow to be deposited in driveway approaches and around roadside obstacles. Operators are instructed to attempt to minimize these instances; however, it is not practical to eliminate this situation. Residents must be aware they will be responsible for the subsequent clearing of their driveways after their street has been plowed.

11. COMPLAINTS

Complaints regarding snow and ice control or damage shall be taken during normal working hours and handled in accordance with the City's normal complaint procedure. High priority complaints (those involving access to property or problems requiring immediate attention) shall be handled on a priority basis. The Public Works Department will attempt to limit response time to twenty-four (24) hours for any complaint. It should be understood that complaint responses are to ensure that the provisions 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 the constraints of our resources.

12. PARKING REGULATIONS

Arden Hills Code of Ordinances Section 800.03 Parking Regulations contains the following provisions relevant to snow and ice control operations.

Subd. 1. Winter Parking Regulations – Except in compliance with the directions of a law enforcement officer or in compliance with regulatory parking signs, no vehicle shall be parked on the improved portion of any street or highway in the City immediately after the accumulation of two or more inches of snow and until snow removal or plowing has been completed.

Subd. 2. Overnight Parking – No vehicles shall be parked on any street between the hours of 2:00 a.m. and 6:00 a.m.

Subd. 5. Parking on Public Streets – Parking on public streets shall not exceed six hours.

Subd. 6. Vehicles over 12,000 Pounds – No motor vehicle or trailer with a rated gross weight exceeding 12,000 pounds shall be parked or stored in a residential zone except when loading, unloading or rendering a service.

Subd. 7. Parking on Boulevard Prohibited – No motor vehicle shall park upon the boulevard of any public street.

Subd. 8. Setbacks from Intersection – Parking shall be set back from street intersections as follows:

- 1. Twenty (20) feet from crosswalk of any uncontrolled intersection;*
- 2. Thirty (30) feet from crosswalk of any controlled intersection; and*
- 3. Twenty (20) feet from any intersection without marked crosswalk.*

Subd. 9. Administrative Procedures – The city administrator shall adopt, from time to time, procedures to provide for the safe and consistent application of the parking regulations. The City Administrator may grant variances from the application of parking regulations provided that the variances can be allowed without creating a safety hazard. Administrative variances shall be in writing and shall state the specific time limits during which the variation will be allowed to occur.