



Council Work Session Memorandum

TO: City Council
THROUGH: Tim Murray, City Administrator
FROM: Travis Block, Public Works Director
MEETING DATE: March 2, 2021
SUBJECT: Consider Revision to Snow and Ice Control Guidelines

Discussion:

The City annually updates, reviews, and adopts Snow and Ice Control Guidelines. The guidelines layout the protocol and practices for snow & ice operations. Guidelines for 2021 were approved at the December 22, 2020 Council meeting with the approval of Resolution 2020-224.

Under the guidelines property damage is addressed as follows:

Mailboxes—Where mailboxes are placed adjacent to the street it shall be the policy of the City that snow be plowed as close as practicable to the curb to allow for passage of traffic and mail delivery. It shall be the responsibility of the property owner to keep piled snow away from mailboxes so mail can be delivered.

Where damage to the mailbox occurs, the Street Superintendent (or designee) shall investigate such damage. If it is determined that the weight of the snow caused the damage, the City will not assume responsibility for repair of the mailbox. Where evidence indicates that physical contact between the plow and the mailbox occurred, the City will provide a payment of \$50.00 to the property owner for repair or replacement. Failure of the property owner to upgrade the mailbox to City standards shall relieve the City from any future liability for damage to the property owners' mailbox resulting from snow removal operations.

Recently, two residents had instances that qualified for payment for a damaged mailbox per the policy. Both of the residents are requesting that the Council consider raising the payment amount, indicating the current amount of \$50.00 is outdated and does not cover the cost of time and materials for replacing a mailbox.

The following is a summary of compensation rates from surrounding communities:

Albert Lea

- The City will repair or replace the mailbox or provide payment of up to \$50 to the property owner for repair or replacement.

Lakeville

- At the property owners' request the City will replace and install the mailbox with a standard size non decorative metal mailbox and replace and install the support posts as necessary with a minimum 4 x 4 decay resistant wood support post or the City will reimburse the property owner \$125.00.

Northfield

- If damage occurs to a mailbox, the Streets and Parks Supervisor shall investigate such damage. If it is determined that that weight of the snow caused the damage, the City of Northfield will not assume responsibility for repair of the mailbox. If evidence shows that there was physical contact with the snowplow the City of Northfield shall provide a \$65.00 payment to the property owner to replace. A limited number of temporary mailboxes are available; however, residents should make every effort to replace their mailboxes as soon as possible.

Owatonna

- City staff will replace mailbox and support with the breakaway type in accordance with USPS recommendations.
- If the resident does not want the breakaway type mailbox support, they may request a one-time reimbursement of \$75.00. The reimbursement will only be available once per property regardless of ownership and includes any labor and costs the owner may incur. Non-conforming mailboxes and support structures will be the responsibility of the residents they serve.

Waseca

- Where mailboxes are placed adjacent to the street it shall be the policy of the City that snow shall be plowed as close as possible to the curb to allow for passage of traffic and mail delivery, it shall be the responsibility of the property owner to keep piled snow away from mailboxes so mail can be delivered. Mailboxes should be constructed sturdily enough to withstand snow rolling off a plow or a wing.
- Where damage to the mailbox occurs such damage shall be investigated by the Street Superintendent. If it is determined that the weight of the snow caused the damage, the City will not assume

responsibility for repair of the mailbox. Where evidence indicates that physical contact between the plow and the mailbox has occurred the City will assume responsibility for repair or replacement at a cost not to exceed \$30.00.

Staff is seeking Council direction on the recommendation of increasing the payment for a damaged mailbox to \$65.00. It is also recommended to provide a payment of \$50.00 for a damaged post. If both the mailbox and post are damaged the property owner would receive \$115.00. It should be noted that the compensation amount has not increased since 2002, when the Snow & Ice Guidelines were established.

Attachments:

- Draft Revised Snow & Ice Control Guidelines



SNOW AND ICE CONTROL GUIDELINES 2021

I. PERSONNEL

All Department of Public Works and Parks and Recreation personnel shall be available for snow and ice control operations. The City may also utilize seasonal personnel and contract services to assist with the snow removal operations. City crews are responsible for snow and ice control operations on approximately 142 miles of roadways within the City, along with alleys, parking lots, and trails/sidewalks.

II. EQUIPMENT

The City of Faribault currently operates and maintains the following equipment for snow and ice control operations:

- 1 truck with reversible plow and sander
- 7 trucks with reversible plow, wing plow and sander
- 2 motor graders with snow-wing
- 4 front-end loaders with plows (includes airport)
- 1 front-end loader w/180hp diesel engine snow blower
- 2 one-ton trucks
- 5 pick-ups with plows
- 3 tractors w/plow and snow blower
- 2 ToolCat tractors w/snow blower
- 2 Skid loaders

When equipment is disabled, every attempt shall be made to get the equipment repaired and operational as soon possible. This may require the call back of one or both of the equipment services mechanics unless adequate back up equipment is available.

III. PROCEDURES

A. Alert and Call Out

During normal working hours, the Public Works Director or designee shall be responsible for monitoring street and weather conditions and initiation of snow and ice control procedures. After hours, on weekends, and during holidays the Police Department shall notify the Public Works Director or designee when snow and ice conditions warrant crew alert.

A call list is provided to the Police Department for general maintenance items such as sanding, street sign repair, and other minor maintenance activities.

B. Sanding and Salting

It shall be the policy of the City to consider cost, environmental impact of salt usage as well as safety of the motoring public when establishing application rates and locations for application.

Sand and/or salt shall be applied to the street surface in such quantities so as to provide a level of skid resistance that is consistent with standards normally experienced on city streets throughout the state of Minnesota during the snow and ice season. Certain portions of the City are salt only zones (downtown, east and southwest zones). It is recognized that a bare pavement policy is not possible at all times during winter periods in the northern regions of the country.

Pre-wetting of salt and sand/salt mixture will be utilized when temperature and conditions warrant its use. Pretreating of certain street surfaces (bridges, Highway 60, downtown, and hills) will occur when conditions allow. An average winter season uses approximately 500 tons of salt and 2,000 ton of sand.

Streets shall typically be spot sanded to provide skid resistance and traction consistent with area standards. Salt only zones are treated with salt on a calibrated lane mile application method. Sanding and salting occurs in accordance with the following priorities:

1. Hills, controlled intersections, bridges, and sharp curves.
2. Arterial and collector streets.
3. School zones.
4. Bus Routes.
5. Commercial and industrial roadways.
6. Residential areas - blanket sanding of general snow pack on residential streets will not be accomplished.

When practical, sanding will be accomplished concurrent with plowing operations, however, not all equipment used in snow removal is capable of sanding. In those cases or when conditions warrant the first priority shall be snow removal with sanding occurring as appropriate equipment becomes available.

- C. Snowplowing - Snowplowing shall normally begin when accumulation reaches a point where functional traffic flow is inhibited. Certain conditions shall warrant the plowing of arterial and collector “mainline” streets only in advance of the remaining areas. This shall be accomplished with the minimum of one plow truck. Plowing shall continue as long as visibility and operator safety is maintained. Work periods shall not exceed safe limits that operators can continue without rest.

Snow removal operations shall proceed as rapidly as possible in accordance with the following priorities:

1. Arterial and Collector Streets
2. School Zone Streets
3. Residential Streets and Alleys

4. City Parking Lots
5. Pedestrian Trails and Sidewalks
6. Skating Rink Facilities (3, all located at Jefferson School)

For an "average storm" (less than six (6) inches of snow), it shall be the policy of the City to have all streets plowed curb-to-curb within 24 hours after snowfall stops. A "non-average storm" (greater than six inches of snow) shall be plowed curb-to-curb within 24-36 hours based on when snowfall stops. The City is divided into 11 plowing districts. In each district the "main line" or heavily traveled streets are plowed first (Division Street, Willow Street, 2nd Avenue N.W., 7th Street N.W., 9th Avenue S.W., Prairie Avenue, etc.). Plows then disperse to the less traveled residential streets. Sanding at this time is kept to a minimum so plows can open the streets as soon as possible for residential and emergency access. Storms of larger magnitude will take longer depending on severity. Extreme snowfalls may warrant the opening of two lanes initially with full width plowing at a later time.

In the downtown area, the snow is windrowed then blown into trucks (rental trucks are typically used) and taken to the designated snow storage area(s). This activity may be completed on the first or second night of a snow event, depending on the timing and amount of the snow event. Clearing of handicapped curb cuts and pedestrian crosswalks shall be the responsibility of the City. The City plows twenty-seven parking lots, including the Fire Station, City Hall, Buckham Center, Community Center, River Bend Nature Center, and various City-owned parking lots. Upon completion of the downtown area, other City buildings are plowed, such as the Water Pumping Station, Water Reclamation Facility, and various City trails/sidewalks.

It shall be the policy of the City that the opening of driveways will not be the responsibility of the City. Property owners shall be responsible for clearing walkways and sidewalks.

All plow routes are divided into relatively equal areas. After the plowing of collector and arterials, these areas shall be plowed on an alternating basis. Plowing continues until all streets have been plowed. The time to open all lanes takes a minimum of eight to eighteen hours depending on conditions. Plowing speeds shall adjusted to match snow and road conditions and shall at all times be lower than the legal speed limits.

Snow removal in cul-de-sacs shall be placed in appropriate areas of the curb line. These piles shall be removed by the City crews when conditions warrant.

D. Snow Hauling

The City of Faribault routinely removes snow from the following streets (primarily the downtown area):

Central Avenue	-	Division Street to 7 th Street N.W.
1 st Avenue N.E.	-	Division Street to 5 th Street N.E.
1 st Avenue N.W.	-	1 st Street N.W. to 7 th Street N.W.
2 nd Avenue N.W.	-	2 nd Street N.W. to 7 th Street. N.W.
Division Street	-	3 rd Avenue W. to 1 st Avenue E.
2 nd Street N.W./N.E.	-	3 rd Avenue N.W to 1 st Avenue N.E.

3 rd Street N.W./N.E.	-	4 th Avenue N.W. to 3 rd Avenue N.E.
Ravine Street	-	3 rd Avenue N.E. to 6 th Avenue N.E.
4 th Street N.W./N.E.	-	Railroad tracks to Heritage Place
5 th Street N.W./N.E.	-	3 rd Avenue N.W. to 1 st Avenue N.E.
6 th Street N.W.	-	2 nd Avenue N.W. to Central Avenue
1 st Street N.W./N.E.	-	1 st Avenue N.W. to 1 st Avenue N.E.
1 st Street S.E.	-	100 Block (behind Buckham Center)
Park Place S.E.	-	Division Street to Willow Street
Glynview Trail	-	Willow Street to Buckingham Path
T.H. 60/Viaduct Bridge		

The Public Works Director or designee shall be responsible for contacting the Police Department in order to coordinate snow removal and hauling operations with law enforcement's tagging and towing duties.

Late spring and early fall snowfalls may be left on roadways if melting is determined eminent or if substantial damage will be caused to the pavement structure. Clearing of intersection snow banks will be accomplished when needed on collectors, arterials and near schools. Ongoing snow and ice control efforts require the use of City owned right-of-ways and easements for storage of plowed snow. Depending upon the volume of snow, storage within right-of-way could create sight obstruction at intersections, because it is impossible financially and practically to remove all snow from intersection corners.

Rental trucks are seasonally bid and utilized for snow hauling operations. The City is responsible for truck loading equipment and snow dumping sites. Four to eight rented trucks are used to haul snow from downtown.

Snow hauling shall begin at 2:00 a.m. or 1 hour following the beginning of snow removal operations starting on the first or second night following plowing operations. Hauling will continue for as many nights as is necessary.

In the downtown, snow shall be pulled off the sidewalk and away from the curb and placed in windrows near the center of the street. From this point, the windrows will be picked up and hauled away.

Snow pickup shall be accomplished using such personnel, equipment and methods appropriate to maintaining a reasonable and safe passage of vehicles and pedestrians at all times. The Public Works Director, Chief of Police, or their designees, may restrict traffic and parking as emergency conditions may dictate.

E. Snowplowing Alleys

It shall be the policy of the City that all alleys will be opened in the aforementioned priority to provide functional traffic movement.

F. Vehicles Parked on Streets (“Snowbirds”)

The City Code of Ordinances prohibits parking on any City street between November 1st and April 1st, between the hours of 1:00 a.m. and 8:00 a.m. when a snow emergency

has been announced and before the street has been cleared curb-to-curb, whichever is later. Vehicles parked in violation of the ordinance between 1:00 a.m. and 8:00 a.m. are subject to a citation and may be towed. Tagging/towing is most often administered in the downtown area, but is applicable city wide. Snow emergencies are announced on KDHL, FCTV, Faribault Daily News, the City web page, Notify Me, Everbridge, Snow Emergency Hotline and social media (and other notification methods as are available). Additionally, the City has two blue lights installed in the downtown area, one at Central Avenue and Division Street, and the other at Central Avenue and 4th Street N. These blue lights flash when activated, indicating a snow emergency has been announced for that evening. The Faribault Police Department may ticket and/or tow any vehicles in violation during this time.

G. Sidewalk Snow Removal

It is the responsibility of property owners to clean and maintain public sidewalks adjacent to their property in accordance with City Code Section 25-41. The City of Faribault is responsible for those sidewalks adjacent to City-owned properties, and along roadways where the City has accepted maintenance responsibility (typically where sidewalk is located along the back of curb or has been designated a “trail” for maintenance purposes, such as along Western Avenue/17th Street N.W.).

The City of Faribault shall also assist business owners located on Central Avenue by cleaning intersection pedestrian ramps after completion of the snow plowing and/or removal operations. It is the intent of this section to provide multiple responsibilities of maintenance in order to provide safe and convenient access to Central Avenue businesses after periods of snowfall. In event citizens observe sidewalks, for which the City is not responsible, that are not being maintained in a timely manner, complaints should be filed with the Faribault Police Department for follow-up and remedy.

H. Trail Snow Removal

The following standards are adopted for providing winter maintenance to designated city trails. The City maintains approximately 6.7 miles of trails.

1. The designated trails are normally plowed when there is measurable snowfall.
2. Snow removal should commence approximately 18 hours from the end of any snowfall with an accumulated depth exceeding two inches. The designated trails should be cleared approximately 48 hours after the commencement of snow removal.
3. The designated trails should be cleared as thoroughly as possible but need not be cleared of all ice and snow nor need they be maintained to bare pavement.
4. Chemical agents and sand might be used in the snow removal process.
5. Snow removal should normally be done by park maintenance employees.
6. Snow removal may be conducted on a 24-hour a day basis, which may result in snow removal equipment being operated in residential areas during the evening and early morning hours.
7. In the event of equipment failure, extreme snowfall, or other unanticipated events, such as park maintenance employees assisting street employees in snow removal from streets, deviation from these standards may be appropriate.

I. Fire Hydrants

Fire hydrants are critical to minimize the potential losses involved in any fire. After major snow build-up in boulevards, the Public Works Department and Fire Department will attempt to maintain clear access to critical hydrants as personnel availability allows. 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.

J. Complaints

It shall be the policy of the City that complaints concerning snow and ice removal be handled in the following manner:

1. Public Works office staff shall receive and record complaints.
2. Slippery street complaints are immediately phoned or radioed to the Street Superintendent (or designee) for possible action.
3. All other complaints shall be recorded and work orders given to the Street Superintendent and/or Foreperson for investigation and action.
4. The Department of Public Works shall investigate all complaints, respond to caller, and record action on work order.

K. Property Damage

It is recognized by the City that on occasion private property is damaged during snow and ice control operations. Where this happens it shall be the policy of the City to handle damages in the following manner:

1. Mailboxes - Where mailboxes are placed adjacent to the street it shall be the policy of the City that snow be plowed as close as practicable to the curb to allow for passage of traffic and mail delivery. It shall be the responsibility of the property owner to keep piled snow away from mailboxes so mail can be delivered.

Where damage to the mailbox occurs, the Street Superintendent (or designee) shall investigate such damage. If it is determined that the weight of the snow caused the damage, the City will not assume responsibility for repair of the mailbox. Where evidence indicates that physical contact between the plow and the mailbox occurred, the City will provide a payment of \$65.00 to the property owner for repair or replacement. Where evidence indicates that physical contact between the plow and the post occurred, the City will provide a payment of \$50.00 for a damaged post. Failure of the property owner to upgrade the mailbox to City standards shall relieve the City from any future liability for damage to the property owners' mailbox resulting from snow removal operations.

2. Boulevard Sod - It shall be the policy of the City that sod damaged during snow removal operations, in locations where curb and gutter is in place, will be repaired the following spring by the Public Works and/or Parks Department using black dirt and grass seed.
3. Curbs - Concrete curbs will not be replaced unless the curb back is broken.

4. Driveway Ramps - Damage caused by the City to driveway ramps/fillets installed in the gutter section of curbing, unless authorized by the Public Works Director, will not be repaired by the City (typically where mountable curb is in place). Such ramps/fillets are generally prohibited due to the obstruction of drainage flow within the curb and gutter, addressed under Section 25-27 of the City Code of Ordinances.

5. Boulevard Intrusions – City Code prohibits intrusions in boulevards on public right-of-way (R.O.W.) without City approval. This includes structures and items such as landscape boulders, posts and fences, improperly positioned mailboxes, masonry structures, timbers, stakes, lawn sprinkler systems and other substantial objects or loose materials within the street R.O.W. These intrusions can damage snowplow equipment or become damaged by the weight of snow or equipment contact. Intruding items in the boulevard (R.O.W.) are not replaced or repaired by the City if damaged.

6. Garbage/Recycling Containers – Efficient snow plowing requires that garbage and recycling containers be accessible for pick-up and placed off street to allow snow removal. The container(s) may have to be placed in the driveway to meet both of these requirements. It is the responsibility of the resident to see that the container(s) is not in the way of the street or sidewalk snowplow and is also in a spot accessible to the garbage and recycling truck(s).

IV. ADMINISTRATION

1. Applicable Ordinances and Statutes

City Code of Ordinances

- Section 15-43 Authority to install temporary traffic restrictions.
- Section 15-44 Leaving vehicles unattended on streets after snow accumulation; removal of vehicles; costs; etc.
- Section 25-27 Obstructing water and drainage flow within curb and gutter sections.
- Section 25-41 Occupant's, owner's duty to keep abutting sidewalk clean; penalties.
- Section 25-42 Removing snow from private property to certain streets, parking lots prohibited.

State Statutes

- MS 160.21 Snow Removal
- MS 160.215 Snow Removal; Salt and Chemicals Restricted
- MS 160.2715 Right-of-Way Use; Misdemeanors
- MS 162-17 Agreements Between County and City
- MS 169.42 Littering; Dropping Object on Vehicle; Misdemeanor

2. Council Review

The City Council shall annually review and adopt by resolution the City's Snow and Ice Control Guidelines.