



CITY OF HAM LAKE SNOW PLOWING/ICE CONTROL POLICY

I. PURPOSE AND NEED FOR POLICY

The City of Ham Lake, being a growing City, needs to annually review and adopt a policy regarding efficient and timely removal of snow and control of ice in order to best provide for safe travel for the greatest number of persons. This policy outlines the responsibility within the Public Works Department in order to accomplish this goal.

II. POLICY

Each year the Public Works Department prepares a map of the City showing the public street system. This map clearly delineates thoroughfare and local residential streets. The map is then divided into six (6) routes for purposes of snow and ice control.

Within each of the areas, the City has classified city streets based on the street function, relative traffic volume, and importance to the welfare of the community. Those streets classified as priority “A” streets will be plowed first. These are higher volume streets, which connect major sections of the city and provide access for emergency fire, police and medical services. The second priority streets (priority “B”) are those streets providing access to schools and commercial businesses. The third priority streets (priority “C”) are low volume residential streets. The fourth priority (priority “D”) is cul-de-sacs and gravels. The fifth priority (priority “E”) is City Park parking lots. (See Exhibit A).

III. PROCEDURES

The Public Works Superintendent or designated representative monitors the street conditions and notifies Public Works personnel of snow and ice conditions needing attention. Public Works personnel are notified in accordance with the Public Works Department Schedule for Emergency Calls. (See Exhibit B).

The Public Works Superintendent or designated representative monitors street conditions and is responsible for making the decision to call out personnel and equipment to begin snow and ice control operations.

IV. RESPONSIBILITY

The Public Works Superintendent or designated representative monitors the street conditions to determine the timing and amount of equipment and personnel necessary to clear the streets.

The Public Works Superintendent or designated representative has the responsibility of determining plow routes and sequencing of operations in accordance with priorities as established in Exhibit A. The superintendent shall retain the latitude to adjust sequencing or route assignments based on storm conditions, equipment availability and/or other conditions warranting changes.

It is the responsibility of each Snow Plow Operator in the Public Works Department to be aware of the department guidelines for Snow Plow Operators. (See Exhibit C). It is the Public Works Superintendents responsibility to discuss these guidelines as well as the entire Snow Plowing/Ice Control Policy with all Public Works personnel on an annual basis.

V. COMMENCEMENT OF OPERATIONS

Snow plowing and/or ice control operations shall commence under the direction of the Public Works Superintendent. In his absence a designated representative will consult and determine when and what operations will begin in accordance with provisions of Exhibit B attached.

In general, operations shall commence as follows:

- A. Snow accumulation of 2 inches, with continual snowfall, warrants commencement of plowing operations.
- B. Drifting of snow may warrant commencement of partial or full operations depending upon conditions.
- C. Icing of pavements may warrant partial or full operation depending upon extent and conditions.

VI. HOW SNOW WILL BE PLOWED

Snow shall 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 with the discharge going onto the boulevard area of the right-of-way. It is the goal of Public Works to have the street system cleaned after a “typical” snowfall in approximately 12 hours. Depending on snowfall conditions and duration of the storm, cleanup operations can widely fluctuate.

VII. USE OF SAND AND SALT

The City is concerned about the effect of sand and salt on the environment and will limit its use for that reason and will not require bare pavement during winter conditions on streets other than priority “A”. Application of the sand/salt mixture is generally limited to priority “A” routes, steep grades and high-volume intersections. Application is limited on lower volume streets and cul-de-sac. The City cannot be responsible for damage to grass caused by the sand/salt mixture and therefore will not make repairs or compensate residents for salt damage to turf areas in the street right-of-way.

VIII. SUSPENSION OF OPERATIONS

Generally, 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, snow plowing/removal operations may be terminated after 10-12 hours to allow personnel adequate time for rest. There may be instances when this is not possible depending on storm conditions and other circumstances. Factors that may delay snow and ice control operations include: severe cold, significant winds and limited visibility. Any decision to suspend operations shall be made by the Public Works Superintendent or designated representative and shall be based on the conditions of the storm. The City will still provide access for emergency fire, police and medical services during a major snow or ice storm.

IX. PROPERTY DAMAGE

Snow plowing and ice control operations can cause property damage even under the best of circumstances and care on the part of the operators. The major types of damage are to improvements in the City right-of-way, which extends approximately 15' beyond the curb location. The intent of the right-of-way is to provide room for snow storage, utilities and other City uses. However, certain private improvements such as mailboxes are required within this area. Therefore, the City will cooperate with the property owner to determine if the damage is the responsibility of the City and when it shall be the responsibility of the resident. The City accepts responsibility for mailboxes, which are allowed to be placed in the road right-of-way, if the damage is by physically being struck by a plow blade, wing, or other piece of equipment. Mailboxes should be constructed sturdily enough to withstand snow rolling off a plow or a wing. Therefore, damage resulting from snow is the responsibility of the resident. The City will repair or replace mailboxes in those instances where the City is responsible for the damage. To be properly placed, a mailbox should be installed so its bottom edge is 45” to 47” above street level; with the post 36” back from the curb or front of the box. That amount of clearance is needed to keep the plow’s wing from hitting the box. If there are any plastic newspaper tubes attached to the mailbox, they must be above 45” height requirement. Any mailbox installed or replaced

by the City shall use a swinging or swing away post system designed to minimize the risk of damage from snowplows. Sprinkler/Irrigation Systems placed in the curb right-of-way are not the responsibility of the City if damaged during snowplowing operations. Anything placed in the right-of-way will be at the owner's expense/risk.

Placement of Garbage/Recycling cans should be 2 feet behind the curb at the end of the driveway, not in the roadway.

In instances where there is a disagreement as to the source of the damage and the responsibility therefore, the Administrator and/or City Council shall determine the responsibility.

X. DRIVEWAYS AND SIDEWALKS

One of the most frequent and most irritable problems in removal of snow 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. City personnel does not provide driveway cleaning. All residents must be prepared to clear their own driveways. The City shovels sidewalks for government buildings and does not shovel and/or plow any other sidewalks or trails within the city.

Minnesota Highway Traffic Regulations

160.27 Sub (5) Misdemeanors:

It shall be unlawful to obstruct any highway or to deposit snow or ice thereon.

Do not plow, shovel, or blow snow onto or across any public street.

169.42 Sub (1)

No person shall throw, deposit, place, or dump upon any street or highway, any snow, ice, etc.

XI. MAIL DELIVERY

The snowplow operators make every effort to remove snow as close to the curb line as practical and to provide access to mailboxes for the Postal Department. 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.

A. MAILBOX DAMAGE

The responsibility to replace and repair damaged mailboxes shall be that of the homeowner unless the Public Works or Street Superintendent determines that the City was negligent. Any mailbox installed or replaced by the City shall use a swinging or swing away post system designed to minimize the risk of damage from snowplows. Any homeowner desiring a different style or design of mailbox must repair or replace the mailbox entirely at the homeowner's expense with no contribution from the City.

XII. 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 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.

**EXHIBIT A
PLOWING/SANDING PRIORITIES**

PRIORITY "A"

Streets with greatest priority, including government buildings, emergency fire, police and medical services

PRIORITY "B"

Streets providing access to schools and commercial property

PRIORITY "C"

Lower volume residential streets

PRIORITY "D"

Cul-de-sacs and gravels roads

Since there are a high number of cul-de-sacs in the city, it takes a while for the smaller equipment to completely remove snow from them. The large snowplow may clear a portion of the street first, then the cul-de-sac equipment will complete the clean-up. Main city streets are cleared first with large plows before the smaller equipment begins clearing cul-de-sacs. Reminder to keep cul-de-sacs clear of all sports equipment such as hockey nets and basketball hoops. Plow operators cannot leave the vehicle to move objects left in the road.

PRIORITY "E"

City Park parking lots are NOT required to stay open during winter months and most will not be plowed. The outdoor ice rink is cleared and maintained as quickly as possible after a snow event. Plowing streets is our priority before clearing the ice rink.

**EXHIBIT B
SNOW AND ICE REMOVAL**

**SNOW PLOWING/WIDE-SPREAD HAZARDOUS ROAD CONDITIONS -
EMERGENCY NOTIFICATION OF PUBLIC WORKS**

In the event of snowfall in excess of 2" or widespread hazardous road conditions where plowing or sanding throughout the community is necessary, the Public Works Superintendent shall call public works personnel as follows:

- A. For snowfall accumulation exceeding 2", by 3:00 A.M. for a 4:00 A.M. commencement of snow plowing operation.
- B. By 5:00 A.M. for a 6:00 A.M. commencement of citywide sanding operations.

This will allow the Public Works Department to prepare the streets for morning rush hour traffic.

Public Works will attempt every day to leave the streets in good winter driving condition when they go out of service at 4:30 P.M.

Public Works personnel are also on-call 24 hours a day to respond to salt/sand because of ice or snowfalls of 2 inches or less as directed by the Public Works Superintendent or designated representative.

EXHIBIT C
GUIDELINES FOR SNOW PLOW OPERATORS

1. Operators will be required to be on stand-by and able to report to work within one and one-half hours' notice from November 15th to March 15th unless arrangements are made with the Public Works Superintendent or designated representative.
2. Operators will be responsible for the vehicle they are assigned to. This includes completing a daily maintenance and equipment check before and after each shift and reporting all deficiencies to the Public Works Superintendent. During snowplowing operations any and all downtime or breakdowns will be reported to the Public Works Superintendent or designated representative.
3. No snow removal vehicles shall be parked with less than three-quarters tank of fuel.
4. Operators shall not assist stranded vehicles by pushing, pulling or jump-starting. Operators may assist by calling for help, offering sand, or offering a helping hand.
5. To minimize damage, no equipment will exceed twenty miles per hour in residential areas.
6. 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 and highways, 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 streets or highways 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 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 or blue light placed in such a position on the vehicle as to be visible throughout an arc of 360 degrees. The foregoing provisions do not relieve the driver of an authorized snow removal or ice control vehicle from the duty to drive with due regard for the safety of all persons.
7. Operators will report all damage to the Public Works Superintendent or designated representative at the end of each shift.
8. When plowing and sanding is complete after each storm, salt/sand should be emptied from all trucks and all equipment should be cleaned and washed.
9. If the operator has completed assigned route, the operator will contact the Public Works Superintendent and will be assigned to assist with other routes.
10. Before the employee leaves at the end of their shift, they must wait until all employees have returned and are dismissed by the Public Works Superintendent or designated supervisor.
11. No plowing of private property or towing of vehicles will be permitted unless it directly affects traffic. Any questions should be directed to the Public Works Superintendent.
12. Every effort will be made not to damage mailboxes and trash containers or other structures in the right-of-way.

Adopted by the City Council November 19, 1990

Revised December 8, 1992

Revised November 1, 1993

Revised November 1, 1994

Revised November 1, 1995 (truck numbers and assignments)

Revised October 20, 1997

Revised October 13, 1998 (truck numbers and assignments)
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Revised October 25, 2001 (truck numbers assignments and mailbox requirements)
Revised Fall 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006
Revised Fall 2007 (guidelines for snow plow operators: Exhibit C 6.)
Revised Fall 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013,2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019
Revised Winter 2023-2024