

**Town Of Whitman**

**Department of Public Works**

**Snow and Ice Management Plan**

## **General**

The purpose of this policy/guide is to provide a general overview of the Town of Whitman Massachusetts' snow and ice program, establish procedures for our snow and ice management on public ways, review important bylaws, answer frequently asked questions, and most importantly, seek your support in providing safe streets and sidewalks during and after snow and/or ice storms. The intent of establishing such a policy /guide is to provide a uniform understanding of the priorities and procedures used to combat snow and ice related conditions and to create reasonable expectations.

The responsibility for providing snow and ice management for the Town of Whitman infrastructure including roadways, sidewalks, town parking lots, town hall, library, senior center, police and fire stations and the town park, rests entirely with the Department of Public Works. Snow and ice management is considered emergency work in that roadways must be cleared of snow and ice any time of the day or night to provide the best reasonable road conditions for the town's Police and Fire departments to respond to emergency calls. The DPW will salt and sand for black ice and light snow conditions and plow off the roadways during more significant storms.

The town's snow and ice management strategy has been carefully prepared to meet the needs of the town. The resulting plan follows clearly identified routes when removing ice and snow from the streets, sidewalks and town parking areas.

## **Snowplowing, Sanding and Salting**

The responsibility for ordering personnel and equipment into service for a snow or ice operation rests primarily with the Highway Superintendent .The Police Department, during off or overnight hours, keeps watch and assists in notification to the superintendents of deteriorating road conditions.

Generally DPW crews are on the roadways sanding and salting as soon as possible when black ice or light snow conditions are present. When storms persist and snow begins to accumulate to approximately four inches all available personnel and equipment will be called in to begin snowplowing operations with approximately twelve additional pieces of equipment provided by private contractors hired by the town to assist. Whitman DPW endorses a "bare pavement", policy to snow removal. This does not mean bare dry pavement should be expected

after each snowfall or ice storm. Furthermore, this does not mean that the streets will be free of ice and snow. It does mean that our snow and ice management techniques are geared toward reaching dry pavement. Expect main roads which receive priority treatment and substantial traffic volume to be clear first. Secondary and neighborhood roads may take several days after larger storms to clear.

The timing of a storm can greatly effect snow and ice operations. Storms occurring during high traffic times are more difficult for our equipment operators and will generally delay salt and plowing operations. The DPW operates four salt and sand trucks dividing the town into quadrants. Each truck has a specific route and will treat the roads by priority: main roads followed by emergency service ramps {police, fire}, then secondary roads and town parking areas.

When plowing of the roads becomes necessary, the DPW will activate approximately 17 pieces of equipment along with 12 private contractors equipment to be deployed about town all having specific routes. When snowfall has stopped it may take more than several hours for the plows to completely clear and push back snow banks. All plow drivers are instructed to push back snow banks to maintain original street widths for safe passage of emergency vehicle if needed. The DPW ask for the public's patience and cooperation as this policy is a public safety necessity.

After all streets have been plowed the DPW will once again deploy the four sanding trucks to help melt any remaining snow, and the effectiveness of the final sanding application is greatly determined by many factors including sunshine, temperature, blowing snow and traffic as main roads with more traffic actually help "work in" and activate the salt more quickly.

Sidewalk clearing operations will not take place until all roads are clear. The DPW will deploy four sidewalk plows or snow blowers, generally v-plows will be used in storms of 8 inches or less, depending on moisture content {weight} of the snow. Heavier snowfall amounts require snow blowers which are extremely high maintenance and may take up to four times longer than v-plowing but generally do a much neater job.

### **Sidewalk Plowing**

The DPW will plow sidewalks along central routes that are heavily traveled by children on their way to and from school and the downtown business areas. These streets are:

Temple St. to the Brockton line north and south sides.

South Ave. to Plymouth St. north and south sides.

Regal St.

Franklin St.

Washington St. Downtown both sides and the east sides East Bridgewater to Abington

Corthell Ave.

Forest St.

High St.

Winter St.

Additional sidewalks will be cleared but may be several days after storms are:

Harvard St.

School St.

Auburn St.

Park Ave.

Essex St.

Pleasant St.

In review, sidewalk plowing will not begin until after the snow has stopped falling and all street plowing has ceased. If we have back to back storms, extended storms, or equipment problems with these very high maintenance sidewalk machines, we may not clear sidewalks immediately after a storm. The DPW asks your assistance in making sure the sidewalk in front of your property be cleared for streets not listed above. Residents and businesses share in the responsibility to provide safe passage in front of their properties. Be a good neighbor and help those that are unable. Also, the DPW would like to remind residents not to pile snow in line with sidewalks as this makes it extremely difficult and time consuming for our sidewalk machines to break through these large piles.

### **Fire Hydrants/Catch Basins**

As a matter of public safety, the DPW would ask residents to help keep clear all Fire Hydrants and Catch Basins near their property whenever possible.

### **Property Damage**

During the course of snow plowing operations throughout any given winter, a certain amount of damage to Town and private property may be incurred by the snow removal forces. If a town plow or truck damages a mailbox either through direct contact or due to the forces of the snow rolling off the plow, you may file for \$25.00 flat rate compensation. Such compensation may only be paid once per snow season. Mailboxes struck more than once a season should be relocated in a manner not susceptible to plow damage.

In addition to mailboxes, a property owner who installs any decorative materials or vegetation within or directly abutting the town's right-of-way, does so at their own risk. The town is not responsible to repair, replace, or compensate for any such items placed in the public way. Be aware that this area may extend 5 to 10 feet or more off the actual paved road or sidewalk.

### **Downtown Snow Bank Removal**

At the discretion of the DPW superintendents, after heavy snowfalls the DPW may clear the downtown business area extending to the east side commuter area of snow banks impeding the public's ability to conduct business safely. This operation can only be preformed in the off hours between 11 p.m. - 5 a.m. and requires the use of 2 front end loaders, 1 backhoe, 2 sidewalk plows and all of the town's dump trucks and several privately contracted dump trucks. This is an expensive operation that we believe to be vital to downtown commerce, and therefore we will do this service as often as possible.

### **Questions and Complaints Received Most Often by the DPW**

**Q.** Can I push snow from my property onto the sidewalk or street?

**A.** NO. A town bylaw prohibits this act. Additionally, such action may incur a fine

**Q.** Do some streets receive priority during a snow storm?

**A.** YES. Main roads, school bus routes, and hills are a top priority

**Q.** Why is snow pushed into my driveway?

**A.** The situation is unavoidable. The plows remove the snow from curb to curb for maximum clearance of the roadway providing maximum drainage and public safety.

**Q.** Why does the DPW sometimes return to plow streets days after a storm when the pavement is already bare?

**A.** After a large snowfall town safety officials [Fire Chief, Police Chief .etc.] may request certain roads to be widened to accommodate large public safety vehicles.

**Q.** Who determines the opening, closing or delayed opening of school during snow and ice storms?

**A.** The School Department

### **Winter Tip**

Please respect parking restrictions. Remember that the snowplows have to navigate many narrow streets. Residents are requested to avoid parking on the street to allow the snowplow to clear the street from curb to curb. Cars that remain on the street may be plowed in, or damaged by a skidding vehicle, ticketed and/or towed.

### **Town Bylaws**

#### **Article XIV Use of Public Ways**

##### *Section 11:*

Between the hours of 11:00 P.M. and 6:00 AM., no person shall place, or cause to be placed, any vehicle which shall interfere with the removing or plowing of snow, or the removing of ice in any way of the town.

The Board of Public Works, or those acting under their orders in the lawful performance of their duties, for the purpose of removing or plowing snow or removing ice, from any way, is hereby authorized and empowered to remove, or cause to be removed, to some convenient place, including in such term a public garage, any vehicle interfering with such work and the owner of such vehicle shall be liable for the cost of such removal, and the storage charged, if any resulting therefrom.

*Section 12:*

The owner or occupant of any land abutting upon a sidewalk or public way in this town, which said property is used for business purposes, shall cause all snow and ice to be removed from such sidewalk. Such snow and ice shall be so removed by plowing, shoveling, scraping or otherwise so as not to damage such sidewalk, and within the first three hours between sunrise and sunset after said snow and ice has ceased to accumulate. Any owner or occupant who violates this provision shall forfeit and pay for each offense a fine not exceeding \$50.00

*Section 13:*

No person shall cause snow to be shoveled or plowed onto any sidewalk or street or public way; and no person shall pump water or other liquid onto any street or public way so as to create a dangerous condition unless the board of Selectmen permits same in an emergency. Any person who violates any of these provisions shall forfeit and pay for each offense a fine not exceeding \$50.00