

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to define and outline snow and ice control objectives and procedures as established by the City of Farmington. This policy supersedes all previously written or unwritten policies of the City regarding snow and ice removal. The Public Works and Parks Departments will review this policy periodically and will amend it as appropriate.

GUIDING PRINCIPALS

Reasonable snow and ice control is necessary for routine travel and emergency services. The City will attempt to provide such control in a safe and cost-effective manner, keeping in mind safety, budget, personnel and environmental concerns. The city will use city employees, equipment and/or private contractors to provide this service. This policy does not relieve the operator of private vehicles, pedestrians, property owners, residents and all others that may be using public streets, of their responsibility to act in a reasonable, prudent and cautious manner, given the prevailing street conditions.

START OF WINTER OPERATIONS

Every winter storm has different variables that can alter how snow and ice control are completed. Wind, temperature, amount of precipitation, storm timing and changing conditions are all considered in the timing of winter operations. The absence of even one employee, the breakdown of one piece of equipment, or not replacing equipment that has become unreliable or requires repairs and maintenance that are not cost-effective can also alter snow and ice control and removal time.

The Streets and Utilities Supervisor or his/her designee will decide when to begin winter operations in consultation with the Parks Superintendent and Municipal Services Director. The criteria for that decision are:

1. Snow accumulation of two (2) inches or more
2. Drifting of snow that causes problems for travel
3. Icy conditions which seriously affect travel
4. Time of snowfall in relationship to heavy use of streets

Snow and ice control operations are expensive and involve the use of limited personnel and equipment. In order to remain cost effective, the City will manage winter operations considering public safety needs (operation of police, fire and ambulance) with the road conditions. Consequently, snowplowing operations will not generally be conducted for a snowfall of less than two inches and operations will start as close to the end of expected precipitation. This means there are times the road conditions will not be ideal for travel. It is the responsibility of all motorists to act in a reasonable, prudent and cautious manner, given the prevailing street conditions.

PLOWING OPERATIONS

Snow is plowed in a manner to minimize traffic obstructions. The center of the roadway will be plowed first. The snow shall then be pushed from left to right. The discharge shall go onto the boulevard area of the street. When snow is less than 6" but greater than 2", curb-to-curb plowing will be completed. In the event of snowfalls greater than 6", routes will be plowed to provide two traffic lanes until all roads are open and then curb-to-curb plowing will take place. Exhibit A shows the City's plow routes.

In times of extreme snowfall, the process of clearing the streets of snow will be delayed, and it may not be reasonably possible to completely clear the streets of snow within one plowing event. Generally, operations shall continue until all roads are passable. Widening and cleanup operations may continue immediately or on the following working day depending upon conditions and circumstances. Due to safety concerns for the plow operators and the public, operations may be terminated after 10-12 hours to allow personnel adequate time for rest.

Cul-de-sacs will be plowed with snow being pushed to the center, where possible. Snow removal will only occur when no storage space is available in the cul-de-sac area.

PRIORITY ROUTES AND SCHEDULING

The City has classified city streets, facilities, trails, sidewalks and recreational facilities based on the street function, traffic volume, and importance of welfare to the community.


Priorities

Priority 1 - Those streets classified as "Priority Routes" will be plowed first. These are high volume streets, which connect major sections of the city and provide access for emergency fire, police and medical services. Exhibit B maps the "Priority Snow Plow Routes"

Priority 2 - Non-street facilities classified as "High" Priority on Exhibit C include the public safety facilities (police and fire), downtown, pedestrian routes for schools, and the Schmitz-Maki Arena Parking Lot

Priority 3 - Low volume residential streets and other city facility parking lots

Priority 4 - Cul-de-sacs, alleys, and other city facility parking lots



Priorities 1-4 generally completed once winter operations are initiated.

Priority 5 - Outdoor rinks

Priority 6 - Community trails and sidewalks

Priority 7 – Snow removal and clean-up as needed



Priorities 5-7 generally completed on the next business day.

To assure completion of priority areas, snow removal may be conducted on a 24-hour basis, which may result in snow removal equipment being operated in residential areas during the evening, night, and early morning hours.

PARKING RESTRICTIONS

City code restricts parking on city streets to expedite the prompt and efficient removal of snow. No person shall park vehicles on any street, alley or parking lot between the hours of 2:30 AM to 5:30 AM from November 1 to April 15 of the following year or after a two-inch or greater snowfall until the streets are plowed. See the City Code for further details.

DOWNTOWN SNOW REMOVAL

There is no boulevard width for snow storage in the downtown. The downtown area will be plowed from ROW to ROW (generally storefront to storefront) with the snow pushed to the center of the street. Crews will remove the snow piles during non-business hours on the day of the event if possible. Snow removal operations may also be delayed depending on weather conditions, time of day, personnel and budget availability.

SNOW REMOVAL

Loading and hauling snow to a storage area may be necessary to maintain public safety. The Streets and Utilities Supervisor will determine when snow will be removed from an area. Such snow removal will occur in areas where there is no room on the boulevard for snow storage and in areas where accumulated piles of snow create a hazardous condition. Snow removal operations will not commence until other snowplowing operations have been completed. Snow removal operations may also be delayed depending on weather conditions, personnel and budget availability.

LEVEL OF SERVICE

The City will use city employees, city owned or rented equipment, and/or private contractors to complete plowing and snow removal. The time to complete plowing operations on all city streets at least one time with the current resources is at the following level of service:

Snow Accumulation	2-4"	4-6"	6"+
Time	8 hours	8-12 hours	12+ hours

Parks/ Trails/ Sidewalks/ Parking_Lots - Level of Service

Snow Accumulation	1-3"	4-12"	12"+
Time	10 Hours	1-2 days	2-4 days

WORK SCHEDULE FOR SNOWPLOW OPERATORS

Snowplow operators will typically be expected to work eight hour shifts. In severe snow emergencies, the City may determine that the operators will have to work in excess of eight hours. After a 12-hour day, the operators will be replaced if additional qualified personnel are available or their work may be suspended.

WEATHER CONDITIONS

Snow and de-icing operations will be conducted only when weather conditions do not endanger the safety of City employees and equipment. Factors that may delay snow and de-icing include severe cold, significant winds, ice, and limited visibility.

DE-ICING

De-icing operations occur when conditions are hazardous or slippery, typically at intersections, curves, hills and the downtown area; keeping in mind the cost and the effect of those materials on the environment.

USE OF RIGHT-OF-WAY AND BOULEVARDS

The intent of the right-of-way is to provide room for public streets, snow storage from public streets, public and private utilities (electric, gas, etc.), sidewalks, street-lights, signage and other public (i.e. mailboxes) uses. Private improvements and uses are not permitted.

1. **OBSTRUCTIONS** - Obstructions in the boulevard can cause damage to equipment and can add time to winter operations. The City will assume no responsibility for damage to private improvements including underground irrigation systems, private lighting systems, trees, shrubs, specialty grasses, rocks, fences, underground dog containment wires, retaining walls, basketball hoops or similar landscaping installed in city controlled right-of-way or easements.

2. **SNOW STORAGE** - The right-of-way and boulevards provide room for snow storage from public streets, sidewalks, and trails. It is necessary that the city maintain a minimum of 6-8 feet of clear zone behind the curb for snow storage. **Minnesota Statute 160.27 states that it is against the law to deposit snow on to a public roadway.**
3. **SNOW FORTS AND TUNNELS** - For safety reasons, snow piled in the ROW should not be used for play. Children in particular are attracted to these piles to climb on or build snow forts and tunnels. Snow piles can be unstable and collapse trapping children inside. Snow cleanup and removal operations can occur at any time during the winter. A snowplow passing by a fort or tunnel could hit and injure children inside. Children and others should use park facilities or backyards for their snow activities.
4. **MAILBOXES** - Snow plow operators make every effort to remove snow as close to the curb line as practical to provide access to mailboxes for the postal carriers. It is not possible to provide perfect conditions and minimize damage to mailboxes with the size of equipment the city operates. Removing snow from the mailbox and maintaining access to the mailbox is the responsibility of the property owner.

Mailboxes must be installed in such a manner as to provide access by Post Office personnel or other parcel carriers and to allow for public works equipment to maintain the streets. Newspaper boxes installed under mailboxes in most cases do not allow for snow equipment to pass under and can cause an indirect hit to the mailbox. The Figure 1 below shows the proper details for mailbox placement.

Mailboxes and posts should be constructed securely enough to withstand snow rolling off a plow or wing. Any posts that are rotten or too weak to withstand winter weather will not be the responsibility of the City. Damage resulting from snow rolling off the plow or wing is the responsibility of the property owner/resident.

The City will bear the cost of the repair of a damaged mailbox **ONLY** if it is a result of city equipment actually hitting the mailbox, not from the weight of snow. The city will install a replacement mailbox and post which shall be a standard size non-decorative type; or the mailbox owner will be reimbursed up to \$75.00 toward the cost of a replacement mailbox and post provided the owner has contacted the Public Works Department within 48 hours for verification and authorization from the Maintenance Superintendent or his/her designee. The city will make temporary repairs to mailboxes for mail delivery if a city plows actually hits a mailbox. When weather and time permit, the Public Works Department will complete the repairs.

A property owner assumes all risk and responsibilities for replacement of mailboxes and supports that are constructed of materials such as, but not limited to, brick and mortar, stone aggregate, ornamental railings, or antique type support.

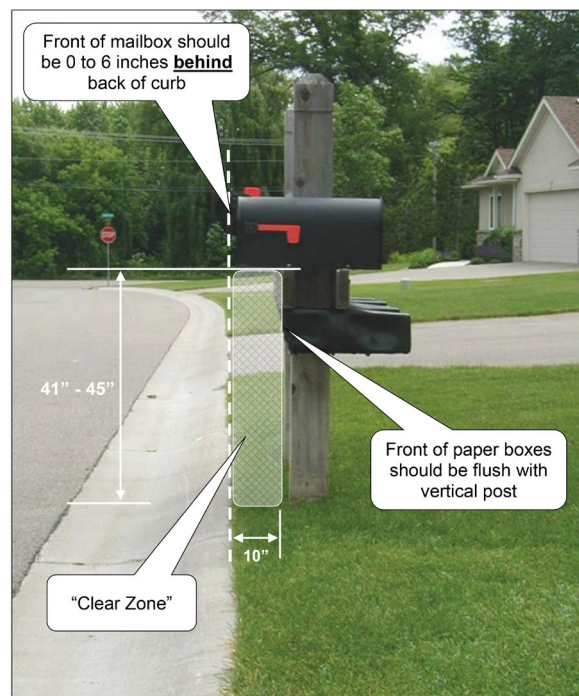


Figure 1 – Recommended Mailbox Installation

5. **BOULEVARD TURF REPAIR** – Plows have limited sight lines and can meander onto boulevard areas even under the best of circumstances and care on the part of the operators. Turf damage can occur when this happens. Residents are responsible for reporting turf damage to the city no later than June 1 following the snow season. The city is not responsible for sod damage due to the application of de-icing operations.

When a turf damage report is received, the city shall verify and record the location of the turf damage caused by city equipment. When the full extent of the area is visible in the spring, the city will review the recorded turf damage locations and determine needed turf repairs. Frequently, the damage looks more severe immediately after the occurrence than it does when the snow has melted in the spring. If the sod needs repair, as determined by the city, the Public Works Department shall be responsible for making the repairs. The city will determine the appropriate turf repair material based on site conditions, materials and available city resources. Once staff has restored the area it will then be the resident's responsibility to water and maintain the damaged area.

6. **GARBAGE CANS** – The city endeavors to maintain garbage and recycling collection service even during winter events. Proper placement of the carts will minimize the potential of them being knocked over by a plow. Carts should be placed 3-5 feet behind the curb in the driveway or in an area cleared of snow along the boulevard. Waste haulers are equipped with an arm that can reach carts at this distance. Carts should not be placed on the snow piles in the boulevard. Placement of carts in front of the curb, on the roadway surface that is to be plowed, is a safety issue during the plowing process and requires extra staff time to come back and clean the curb line at a later time. The city is not responsible for garbage carts knocked over by a plow or snow rolling off a plow.

It is the responsibility of commercial customers to clear garbage enclosures to allow garbage haulers access to carts and dumpsters and maintain a drivable route to the enclosure. The city has the right to suspend service if access is too icy or enclosures are not free of snow.

7. **DRIVEWAYS** – When a plow goes by one of over 8,000 driveways and street accesses, the windrow of snow from the wing extends across it. While this is an inconvenience, especially when the plow runs multiple times, it is a property owner's responsibility to remove this snow.

Property owners can minimize this impact by using a technique that helps reduce the amount of snow deposited in the driveway. First, place as much snow as possible from the end of your driveway downstream in the direction of traffic. Second, clear an area upstream from your driveway to create an open "pocket". Much of the snow pushed by the plow truck will empty into this pocket and less will wind up in the driveway entrance. You must maintain this area throughout the winter for it to be effective. Figure 2 shows a depiction of this technique.

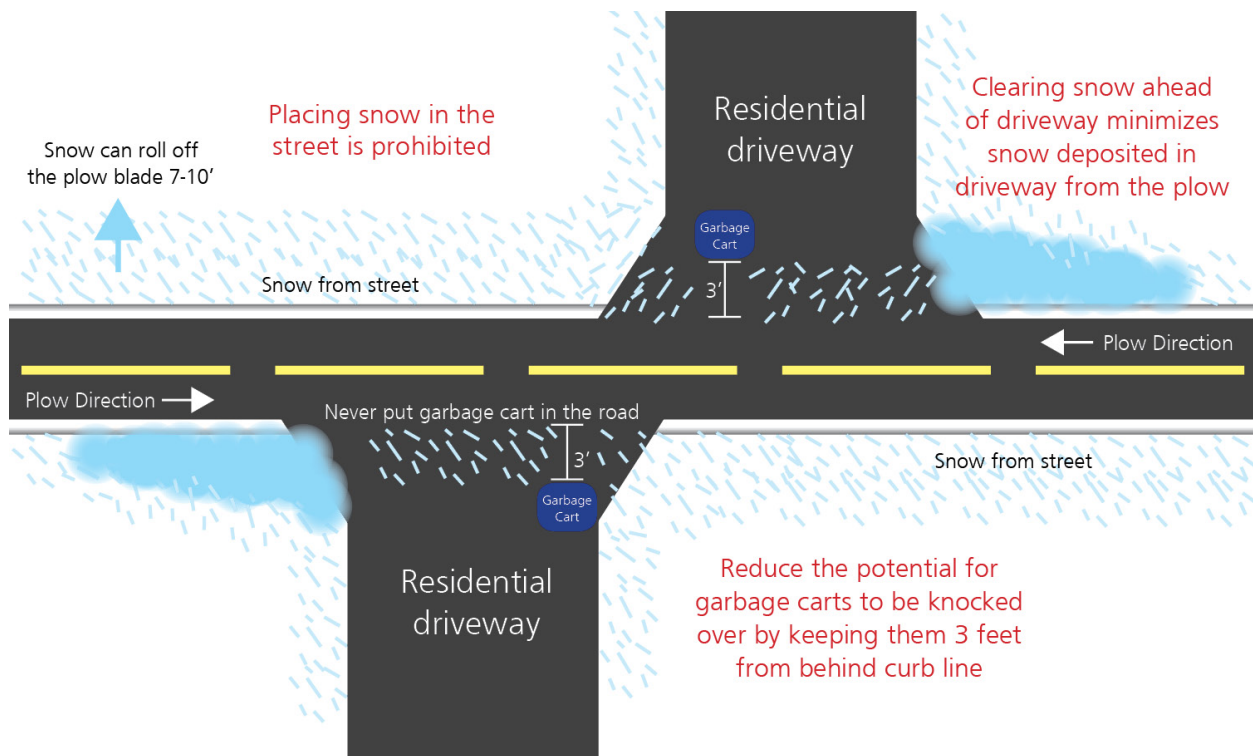


Figure 2 – Driveway Snow Clearing

TRAILS, SIDEWALKS AND OTHER RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

The City has classified all sidewalks, trails and recreation facilities which are mapped on Exhibit C. The following standards are adopted for providing winter maintenance to these pedestrian facilities:

1. The designated sidewalks, trails, parking lots, accesses, and rinks are normally plowed, blown or swept. The method of snow removal depends on the amount and type of snowfall.
2. Designated trails and sidewalks will be cleared as thoroughly as possible but need not be cleared of all ice and snow, nor maintained to bare pavement.
3. City facilities and downtown sidewalks will be treated with salt or other chemical to reduce ice by City staff as time permits. Other sidewalks and trails throughout the City will not be salted or treated with chemicals.
4. It shall be the responsibility of the abutting property owner to keep sidewalks clear of snow or ice in accordance with City Code 6-1-6. Exceptions to this standard are routes designated within this policy to be completed by the City. If notice has been sent to the owner/occupant and snow has not been removed, the City may choose to remove the snow and ice and charge the cost of removal to the property owner. Fees for enforcement of this code and city snow removal are set by the City Council with the annual fee schedule. The City reserves the right to charge additional fees as may be reasonable and appropriate.

SKATING RINKS

The following standards are adopted for providing winter maintenance to hockey and pleasure ice-skating rinks which are listed on Exhibit C.

1. All rinks (with warming houses) will be swept and flooded Monday through Friday, if needed.
2. If rinks become rough or uneven due to weather conditions, i.e., warm weather, frost boils, or freezing rain, rinks will be shaved as time allows during normal working hours.
3. In the event of snow:

- a. No rink will be maintained until snowfall ceases.
 - b. Maintenance crews will generally maintain rinks during normal working hours. The Parks & Facilities Supervisor may decide to call in a crew on weekends or holidays to maintain rinks, if snow fall exceeds 2" AND it provides efficiency to remove snow (i.e. freezing conditions).
 - c. Outdoor rinks are ranked as a low priority and therefore will not be maintained until high and medium winter operations are completed.
4. If the condition of the ice becomes a safety concern, rinks may be closed at the discretion of the the Parks & Facilities Supervisor or his/her designee.
 5. For safety reasons, the City has a weather policy that determines rink closing. The warming house and rinks will be closed if the actual air temperature and/or wind chill reaches -20 degrees Fahrenheit or colder. The weather cancellation hotline is (651) 280-6870.