



Snowplowing and Ice Control Policy

Adopted November 2, 2009

1. Introduction

The City of Arlington believes it is in the best interest of the residents for the City to assume basic responsibility for control of snow and ice on city streets. Reasonable ice and snow control is necessary for routine travel and emergency services. The City will 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.

2. Equipment

The City shall acquire, maintain, repair and replace equipment on a timely basis as the City's established budget shall allow. To provide for utilization of equipment in a cost effective manner, the City may use regular city trucks, motor graders, front-end loaders and any other regular equipment as may be useful for control of snow and ice. Equipment that can be used for snow and ice control only, shall be acquired and utilized only if deemed absolutely essential.

Whenever existing snow removal heavy equipment is broken down for a period of time that comprises snow removal/hauling abilities during a declared snow emergency, the Streets Superintendent may rent equipment. The City Administrator shall be notified within a reasonable period of time of the decision.

When the Streets Superintendent determines that the policy levels of service cannot be provided by city forces/contract services, the Superintendent shall report to the City Administrator the information necessary to complete the required levels of service.

3. When the City will start snow or ice control operations

The Streets Superintendent will decide when to begin snow or ice control operations. The criteria for that decision are:

- A. Snow accumulation of 2 inches or more;
- B. Drifting of snow that causes problems for travel;
- C. Ice conditions which seriously affect travel; and
- D. 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. Consequently, snowplowing operations will not generally be conducted for snowfall of less than 2 inches.

4. How Snow will be plowed

Snow will 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 on two-way streets. On one-way streets or where there is a center boulevard, snow may be pushed in either direction. The discharge shall go onto the boulevard; snow may be pushed in either direction.

The discharge shall go onto the boulevard area of the street. Snow on cul-de-sacs will normally be plowed to the center in an attempt to provide the largest running radius possible for emergency vehicle ingress and egress. When a plow goes on a bridge, the driver shall slow down so snow does not go over the bridge, if possible. In times of extreme snowfall, streets will not always immediately be able to be completely cleared of snow.

5. Snow Removal

The Streets Superintendent will determine when snow will be removed by truck from the 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 created 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 removal operations may also be removed and hauled to a snow storage area. The snow storage area will be located so as to minimize environmental problems. In years of heavy snowfall, snow removal efforts will assist property owners with the clearing of snow piles around fire hydrants, based on priorities previously mentioned such as safety, budget and availability of personnel.

6. Priority of Street Plowing

The City has classified city streets based on the street function, traffic volume, and importance to the welfare of the community. Those streets classified as “Snow Plow Routes” will be plowed first. These are high volume routes, which connect major sections of the City and provide access for emergency fire, police, and medical services.

The following routes are designated in descending order as the priority ranking of streets to be plowed in the City:

1. Snow Emergency/First Priority Streets

The following streets are designated as snow emergency routes:

- See attached Snow Emergency Route Map (Figure 1)

2. Secondary Priority Streets

The secondary priority streets are low volume residential streets and all remaining through streets.

3. Third Priority Streets

The third priority areas are alleys and city parking lots.

7. Minimum Levels of Service

The following are minimum levels of service that can be expected. The City will strive to achieve better results if possible.

Snow and/or ice control may be terminated at any time the Streets Superintendent or his designee determine that rising temperatures, visibility and/or the rate of accumulation make the control unsafe, ineffective or unnecessary.

Should a subsequent storm occur within the minimum times for service, then such subsequent storm shall become the storm referred to in this policy.

1. It is the intention of the City to keep streets open to traffic, if possible, during a storm; however, it is not the intent to keep them snow or ice free.
2. All designated priority streets shall be open to traffic (two lanes) within 12 hours after the snow storm subsides.
3. All remaining through streets shall be open to traffic (two lanes) within 36 hours after the snowstorm subsides.
4. All public streets, including alleys, shall be open to traffic (one lane) within 60 hours after a snowstorm subsides.
5. All streets adjacent to schools shall be plowed curb to curb within three days after all streets are open, unless snow is of such depth that snow hauling is necessary.
6. Depending on the timing of the snowstorm, the Streets Superintendent or his designee may elect to plow streets during the evening or early morning hours, however, Main Street must be cleared by 6:00 a.m. after a snowfall of 2 or more inches. City owned Main Street parking lots are generally plowed at the same time as Main Street. Snow may be piled, without obstruction to Main Street businesses, for removal when snow is hauled from Main Street.
7. Main Street snow hauling, if necessary, shall begin after all snow emergency and priority streets have been plowed.
8. To the extent possible, snow depth at the corners of intersections shall be reduced to 36 inches or less following other necessary operations. The Streets Superintendent or his designee shall have the authority to determine the scheduling and priority of this function.
9. Certain streets within the City are maintained by the State of Minnesota and Sibley County and fall under state and county maintenance policies.

8. Work Schedule for Snowplow Operators

Snowplow operators will be expected to work their regular eight-hour shifts. In severe snow emergencies, operators sometimes have to work in excess of eight-hour shifts. However, because of budget and safety concerns reasonable care should be taken not to work more hours than is safe to operate heavy equipment. Operators will take a fifteen-minute break every two hours with a half-hour meal break after four hours. After a twelve-hour day, the operators will be replaced if additional qualified personnel are available.

9. Traffic Regulations

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, 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 city streets 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 operators of 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 light placed in such a position on the vehicle as to be visible throughout an arc of 360 degrees.

10. Weather Conditions

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

11. Use of Sand, Salt, and other Chemicals

The City will use sand, salt, and other chemicals when there is hazardous ice or slippery conditions. The City is concerned about the effect of such chemicals on the environment and will limit its use for that reason.

12. Dispatching of Equipment

Dispatching of equipment shall be determined by the Streets Superintendent or his designee. Plowing and/or sanding operations may occur during the assigned work shift or on a specific situation call out. If the specific situation is on a primary snow emergency route, the response shall be as soon as possible if workers and equipment are available and it is more than four hours until a work shift is to begin. Once a work shift has ended, the Streets Superintendent or his designee has the discretion of responding immediately to other specific situations (if the situation is considered an emergency situation) or waiting until a new work shift begins.

For emergency vehicles responding to emergency situation (fire, medical, police) within the City, necessary workers and equipment will be dispatched as soon as possible.

13. Damage to Personal Properties

Only those properties which are installed properly and allowed by city ordinance to be adjacent to streets and damaged by actual contact with city equipment will be considered for repair or replacement at city expense. Damage to trees, shrubbery and other landscaping will not be considered for compensation.

Damage to personal vehicles will be considered only if they are legally parked and only if physically contacted by equipment.

14. Mailboxes

Coming into contact with a mailbox is a common obstacle snowplow operators face during storm activities. The City will conduct a review of each mailbox incident to determine whether the City will replace or provide reimbursement for the mailbox. Only mail boxes actually hit by a snowplow will be the responsibility of the City. The City will not be responsible for damage to mailboxes or support posts caused by snow or ice coming into contact with the mailbox. At the mailbox owner's request, the City will replace the mailbox with a standard size, non-decorative metal mailbox and replace the support post as necessary with a 4" x 4", decay resistance wood support post, both installed by the City. Alternatively, the City will reimburse the mailbox owner \$50.00 for the replacement of the mailbox and post by others.

15. Plowing of Private Property

Unless snow removal is being done in accordance with City Ordinance 216.4 (Appendix A) and unless there is direct benefit to city operations or unless emergency vehicles need access, there shall be no plowing of private property with city equipment. An example of direct benefit to city operations would be entrepreneurial compensations for undertaking commercial snow removal operations. The City's "labor rates and policies for city equipment and supplies" shall be the guide for charging fees. These snow removal operations shall commence only after snow removal activities have been completed on public property.

16. Driveways and Sidewalks

Snow removal from sidewalks should be done in accordance with City Ordinance 178 (Appendix A). One of the most frequent and most irritable problems in removal of snow from public streets is the snow deposited in driveways and sidewalks during snowplowing 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 and sidewalks, but the amount can still be significant. Based on priorities and staffing levels, City personnel do not provide driveway and sidewalk cleaning except for City owned property.

17. Mail Delivery

The snow plow operators make every effort to remove snow as close to the curb line as practical and provide access to mailboxes for the Postal Department. However, it is not possible to provide perfect conditions for mailboxes with the size and type of equipment the City and the City's contractor operates. Therefore, final cleaning adjacent to mailboxes is the responsibility of each resident.

18. Complaints and Review of Policy

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 shall 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 had 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.

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APPENDIX A

City Ordinance 178 – Regulating the Removal of Ice and Snow on Public Sidewalks

Section 1. Public Nuisance. Any accumulation of snow or ice upon any public sidewalk is hereby declared to constitute a public nuisance, which shall be abated, by the owner or occupant of the property abutting such sidewalk within twelve (12) hours after such snow or ice has ceased to be deposited upon such sidewalk.

Section 2. City Removal. If the owner or occupant of the property abutting any public sidewalk upon which snow or ice has accumulated fails to abate the nuisance thereby created within twenty-four (24) hours after such snow or ice has ceased to be deposited upon such sidewalk, the City Administrator or a designated agent may cause the removal of such snow or ice. The agent causing such removal shall maintain a record showing the cost of such removal attributable to each separate lot and parcel and shall deliver such information to the City Administrator.

Section 3. Assessment. Upon receipt of the information required by the preceding subdivision, the City Administrator shall forward to the Council a statement setting forth the unpaid charge for the cost of the removal of any snow or ice pursuant to subdivision 2 hereof for each separate lot or parcel. The Council may then, pursuant to the provisions of Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 429, assess any such charge against the property benefited, and any such assessment shall, at the time at which taxes are certified to the County Auditor, be certified for collection in the manner that other special assessments are so certified.

Section 4. Civil Suit for Cost of Removal. The City Administrator may, as an alternative to the assessment procedure set forth in subdivision 3, initiate a civil suit in a court of competent jurisdiction to recover from the owner of land adjacent to which sidewalks have been cleared as provided in subdivision 2 hereof, the cost of the removal of snow or ice, together with allowable costs and disbursements.

Section 5. Placing Snow or Ice on Public Street or City Property. It is unlawful for any person, not acting under contract with the City, to remove snow or ice from private property and place such snow or ice upon a public street, in such quantity or manner as to cause a hazard to travel, without proper arrangements for the immediate removal thereof. It is unlawful for any person, not acting under contract with the City to place or deposit any snow or ice upon City property.

City Ordinance 216.4 – Regulating Parking and Snow Removal

Subd. 1 Winter Parking Regulations. Except in compliance with the directions of a law enforcement officer or in compliance with regulatory parking signs placed by law enforcement officers or employees of the City, no vehicle(s) shall be parked on any street or highway in the City during the period of time commencing 2 hours after the accumulation thereon of two or

more inches of snow and continuing thereafter until snow removal or plowing has been completed. If vehicle(s), trailer(s), or other obstacle(s) are not removed within two (2) hours of the first two (2) inches of snow, said obstruction will be ticketed. If said vehicle(s) or obstruction is not removed within twelve hours (12) of being ticketed, said vehicle(s) or obstruction(s) will be towed and impounded at the owner's expense.

Subd. 2. Business parking lots. Except in compliance with the directions of a law enforcement officer, or in compliance with regulatory parking signs placed by law enforcement officers or employees of the City, snow shall not be moved from the property of a private business onto a city street. A private business may contract with the City to place snow onto a city street. The City will set conditions and a fee, based on the size of the property, to remove such snow. It is unlawful for any private business, not acting under contract with the City, to place or deposit any snow or ice onto a City street. Private businesses violating this section may be subject to a fine for time spent by the City to remove the snow at \$150 per hour with a one half (1/2) hour minimum charge. Future fines shall be set by resolution.