



City of Hutchinson  
Snow Removal and Ice Control Policy

October, 2014

# City of Hutchinson

## Snow Removal and Ice Control Policy

### Purpose of this Policy

The City of Hutchinson recognizes that assuming basic responsibility for snow removal and ice control on City streets is in the best interest of the residents, businesses and industries of Hutchinson. Providing reasonable snow removal and ice control is necessary for emergency, commercial, and personal travel. The City strives to provide this service in a timely, safe, and cost-effective manner; keeping in mind safety, budget, personnel, equipment and environmental concerns. The City will primarily use its own personnel and equipment to provide this service, but may also, when necessary or beneficial, use private contractors.

This policy does not relieve the operators of private vehicles, pedestrians, property owners, residents and all others that may be using public streets or that may be otherwise affected by snow removal operations, of their responsibility to act in a reasonable, prudent and cautious manner, given the prevailing weather and street conditions.

### Responsibility and Authority for this Policy

The Public Works Department is charged with the primary responsibility for executing snow removal and ice control operations and for exercising the appropriate levels of authority to ensure maintenance and compliance with this policy.

*(In this document the title Public Works Department includes the qualified Public Works employee designated by the Director/City Engineer to oversee snow removal and ice control operations. This position is typically assigned to a senior operations manager, but may from time to time be assigned to another experienced Public Works employee in the absence of a senior operations manager.)*

The Public Works Department is responsible for coordinating equipment and personnel, assigning them work based on the need for snow removal and ice control within the City. The Public Works Department retains the authority to alter assignments based on weather conditions, equipment and personnel availability, and other conditions related to snow removal/ice control. In extreme cases, the Public Works Department can declare a snow emergency for the purposes of restricting on-street parking and enlisting the assistance of City employees or equipment not usually assigned to snow removal responsibilities and to hire contractors to provide snow removal services.

In cooperation with emergency services personnel, the Public Works Department continuously monitors weather conditions to determine appropriate action.

## Priorities for Service

Snow removal and ice control services will be generally provided using these priorities:

- 1<sup>st</sup> priority: Priority routes and central business district areas with no boulevard
- 2<sup>nd</sup> priority: Other business districts, truck routes and the airport
- 3<sup>rd</sup> priority: Through streets and specifically identified public properties
- 4<sup>th</sup> priority: Cul-de-sacs, dead-end streets, and alleys
- 5<sup>th</sup> priority: Specifically identified sidewalks, trails, and walkways
- last priority: Other public property and maintenance activities.

The Public Works Department has the authority to deviate from these priorities, should conditions warrant. These priorities, however, will apply to nearly every snow removal and ice control operation.

## Policy Provisions

1) Initiating Operations: Commencement of snow removal and ice control operations depends upon immediate and anticipated conditions. The Public Works Department generally initiates snow removal and ice control operations when:

- a) weather conditions do not endanger the safety of employees, contractors, or equipment.
- b) when operations will be effective.
- c) there are at least two inches of snow accumulation.
- d) significant blowing and drifting of snow into traveled portions of major roadways and intersections has occurred.
- e) rainstorms, ice storms, and/or periods of light snow create slippery conditions. Efforts during these situations will be concentrated on major roadways, bridges, steep grades, and heavily traveled intersections.

Operations may be initiated any time the operations are deemed to be beneficial.

2) Suspension of Operations: The Public Works Department may suspend operations at any time if temperatures, winds, visibility, and/or the rate of accumulation make operations unsafe, ineffective, or unnecessary.

3) Staffing Operations: Snow removal and ice control operations may occur during assigned work shifts or, in some situations, on a call-out of workers. The Public Works Department has the discretion to recall workers or wait until the next assigned work shift to respond to specific snow removal or ice control service requests. For safety reasons, operators of snow removal and ice control equipment will generally not be scheduled to work more than 12 hours in any 24-hour period with less than nine hours off between work shifts.

4) Response to Emergencies: Emergency services officers may contact the Public Works Department to dispatch workers and equipment to provide services for emergency vehicles (i.e., police, fire, ambulance, electrical outages, gas leaks, etc.) responding to emergencies within the City.

5) Routes: Each year the Public Works Department prepares a map of the street system serviced by the City. A map of the sidewalk/trail system and public properties serviced by the City is also prepared. These systems are divided into route areas that identify personnel, equipment, and if necessary, the private contractors used to provide the services. Route areas are periodically revised to correspond with budget, equipment, personnel, and other resources available to the City.

Priority routes are identified within each route area. Hazards are also identified in each route area. These route areas are generally assigned to individuals and are used for planning and executing routine snow plowing and ice control operations.

6) Methods: Snow is generally plowed in a way that reduces traffic obstructions and the affect of future snowfalls. Generally, snow will be plowed from the center of the street outward toward the curb line so the snow discharges onto the boulevard. Some streets may be plowed from one side of the street to the other. Snow may also be moved to the center or side of the street to be hauled away later. Cul-de-sacs and dead-end streets will generally be plowed to the outside. When plowing on bridges, operators will adjust their speed to reduce or eliminate the snow from going over the side of the bridge.

As necessitated by available resources, snow is plowed to the edge of the street without regard for sidewalks, driveways and other structures located in the right-of-way. The City recognizes the inconvenience that comes from accumulations on rights-of-way, sidewalks and driveways, but the City is not responsible for removing snow from rights-of-way, private driveways, most sidewalks, or from around private structures located in the right-of-way. Snow is removed only from sidewalks specifically identified on maps and from other areas only at the direction of the Public Works Department.

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 have discretion to disregard traffic laws, when, in their judgment, it is safe to disregard such laws and such action complies with Public Works policy entitled "Operation of Road Maintenance Equipment".

## 7) Expected Minimum Levels of Service:

*The following represents the minimum levels of services that can be expected. The City strives to achieve better results whenever possible:*

I.) It is the City's intent to keep designated priority routes open to traffic, if possible, during a storm or have them open as soon as possible after snow accumulation has subsided. 'Open to traffic' means there is a lane available for cars to travel on; the term does not necessarily mean the street is plowed from curb to curb.

II.) As many routes as possible that serve business areas and densely populated residential areas are to be open to traffic within 12 hours after snow accumulation subsides.

III.) Through streets are to be open to traffic within 36 hours after snow accumulation subsides. All public streets are to be open to traffic within 48 hours, unless snow accumulation is of such depth as to require removal. Every public street, alley, and parking lot is to be opened to normal, functional traffic patterns within four days after snow accumulation subsides.

IV.) Where space does not allow for snow to be moved from traffic lanes to storage on the adjacent boulevard, the City may pile snow and haul it away. Snow may be stored in strategic locations for a time before the snow is hauled away.

V.) Significant accumulations of snow on bridges will be removed. Removal of snow from bridges will begin only after all City streets, alleys and parking areas have been serviced, and normal, functional traffic patterns have been restored. Because of safety considerations, this task will normally be done during daylight hours.

VI.) Snow may be removed from selected critical intersections, away from fire hydrants, and from other utility appurtenances requiring access. These services will begin only after all City streets, alleys, parking areas, and bridges have been serviced. Snow may also be removed from boulevards and along curbs. Because of safety considerations, these tasks will generally commence during daylight hours.

Priority Snow Removal Routes: The following are designated priority routes:

<u>Name of Street</u>	<u>From:</u>	<u>To:</u>
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Ave SW/SE</b>	Dale St SW	Michigan St SE
<b>5<sup>th</sup> Ave NE/NW</b>	Montana St NW	Bluff St NE
<b>5<sup>th</sup> Ave SW/SE</b>	Lynn Rd SW	T.H. 22
<b>California St NW</b>	T.H. 7	School Rd NW
<b>Century Ave SW/SE</b>	Dale St SW	Jefferson St SE
<b>Dale St SW</b>	School Rd SW (Co Rd 7)	2nd Ave SW
<b>Echo Dr SW</b>	Freemont Ave SW	T.H. 15
<b>Edmonton Ave SW/SE</b>	Dead end	Jefferson St SE
<b>Elm St NE</b>	McLeod Ave NE	North High Dr NE
<b>Freemont Ave SW</b>	T.H. 15	Dead-end
<b>Golf Course Rd NW</b>	North High Dr NW	Montana St NW
<b>Jefferson St SE</b>	Airport Rd	Washington Ave E
<b>Lynn Rd SW/TH 15 Service Rd</b>	South Grade Rd SW	Washington Ave W
<b>McDonald Dr SW</b>	Lakewood Dr SW	School Rd SW
<b>McLeod Ave NE/6<sup>th</sup> Ave NE</b>	T.H. 15	Bluff St NE
<b>Michigan St SE/NE</b>	5th Ave SE	T.H. 7
<b>Oakland Ave SE/TH 15 Service Rd</b>	Freemont Ave SW	Adams St SE
<b>Roberts St/Rd SW</b>	McDonald Dr SW	Dale St SW
<b>School Rd SW/NW</b>	South Grade Rd SW	North High Dr NW (Co Rd 12)
<b>Shady Ridge Rd NW</b>	T.H. 7	7 <sup>th</sup> Ave NW
<b>Sherwood St SE</b>	Airport Rd	Century Ave SE
<b>South Grade Rd SW</b>	School Rd SW	T.H. 15
<b>Sunset St SW</b>	Century Ave SW	South Grade Rd SW
<b>Washington Ave W</b>	Lynn Rd SW	Main St

Sand and Salt

The City does not have a bare pavement policy. Falling snow and general snow pack remaining on City streets will not normally be removed.

Sanding operations are initiated to provide some temporary relief from skidding. Salt is applied to melt ice on streets. Application of sand is generally limited to intersections, hazardous areas, and isolated slippery areas. Sand will be applied at times and at rates that maximize effectiveness. Salt, while used to melt snow, is also mixed with sand to prevent the sand from freezing. The Public Works Department may order use of additional salt if pavement or air temperatures and precipitation type warrant use of additional salt for melting ice and snow. The Public Works Department may also order use of salt brine to provide additional ice and snow melting capabilities.

The Public Works Department may use other minerals, chemicals and mixtures to assist in ice control, provided they are deemed to have fewer or the same effect on the environment as sand and salt mixtures and are economically feasible.

### Snow Removal on Sidewalks, Trails & Walkways

It is the responsibility of the adjacent property owner, using due diligence, to keep sidewalks, trails and walkways clear for pedestrian travel.

There are certain sidewalks, trails, and walkways, identified by the City, which may receive some snow removal services from City staff and equipment. These services are provided at the City's discretion, on a priority basis, and do not relieve property owners of their responsibilities.

Snow remaining on sidewalks 24 hours after snow has stopped falling, including snow that was plowed from public streets onto the sidewalk, is a public nuisance. Property owners will be notified that their property is in violation.

Beginning 12 hours after notification, City crews may clean sidewalks, trails, and walkways and bill adjacent property owners for that service. Unpaid bills will be certified to the following years' property taxes.

### Snow Disposal Site

The City of Hutchinson provides a snow disposal site located on City property north of the Hutchinson Armory, 1200 Adams St SE. Private parties may use the snow disposal site free of charge. The City will provide no services at this site, so close cooperation between parties is encouraged to ensure snow is dumped in an orderly fashion. This site is the only City snow disposal site that private parties shall use.

### Snow Removal on Private Properties

It is a violation of statutes and ordinances to move snow from private properties onto or across public roadways. Property owners engaging in or allowing these activities are subject to the consequences of the statutes and ordinances.

### Private Contractors Providing Snow Removal Services

Permits for private snow removal contractors are required by ordinance. The City, however, does not require private contractors to obtain a written permit from the City, but their activities are still considered to be permitted.

If a private contractor violates statutes, ordinances or policies related to snow removal, the City Council can suspend their privilege of conducting snow removal business within the City.

## Damage to Property

Snow removal and ice control operations can cause damage to property, even under the best circumstances and care by equipment operators. Most often, damage occurs to property improvements in the right-of-way, which generally extends 10 to 15 feet beyond the edge of street pavement.

The City is not responsible for damage to vegetation caused by plowing or the application of sand and salt mixtures. The City will not make repairs to nor compensate residents for damaged vegetation. In certain cases, the City may clean up dead sod, and over-seed or sod areas on private property. Generally, sod will not be used on public rights-of-way. Residents are encouraged to remove excess sand, dispose of the sand properly, and thoroughly flush areas that may be affected by sand and salt mixtures.

Only allowable and properly installed properties that are damaged by actual, physical contact with City equipment will be considered for repair at City expense. Personal property in the City's right-of-way damaged by snow being deposited from an accumulation on the blade of a snowplow will not be considered for compensation. The City Council has the authority to set reasonable maximum compensation limits for specific types of personal property placed in the right-of-way.

When disagreement about the responsibility for the damage occurs, the Public Works Department will investigate and decide responsibility. In certain cases, where there is significant damage, the Police Department may be called to assist with the investigation. As always, property owners may bring their concerns to the City Council.

Equipment operators and contractors are directed to immediately contact the Police Department and the Public Works Department whenever an incident involves damage to vehicles, significant structures, or involves any injury to a person.

Equipment operators and contractors also report existing damage they observe to avoid any potential future claim the damage was caused by snow removal or ice control operations.



## Mailboxes

Coming into contact with a mailbox is a common obstacle snowplow operators face. If mailboxes are damaged, the City may install a temporary replacement until weather conditions are conducive to repair. The City will conduct a review of each mailbox incident to determine whether the City will repair, replace or provide reimbursement for the mailbox. Only mailboxes 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 in contact with the mailbox. The City will replace damaged mailboxes with a standard size, non-decorative metal or plastic mailbox and replace the support post, as necessary, with a 4"x4" decay resistant wood support or standard galvanized post/tube support installed by the City. If the owner desires a mailbox configuration other than the City's standard, the City will reimburse the mailbox owner at a rate identified in the City's Fee Schedule for the replacement of the mailbox and post.

## Other Entities

Certain streets within the City are maintained by other governmental entities. The Minnesota Department of Transportation and the McLeod County Highway Department maintain separate maintenance policies for streets within the City maintained by them. From time to time, entities may contract with each other to perform snow removal services. The ultimate responsibility for snow removal services rests with the controlling entity.

Others maintain these streets:

<u>Name of Street</u>	<u>From:</u>	<u>To:</u>	<u>Entity:</u>
<b>TH 15 S/Main St S/Main St N</b>	South city limit	North city limit	Mn/DOT
<b>TH 7 W/4th Ave NW/ 4th Ave NE /TH 7 E</b>	West city limit	East city limit	Mn/DOT
<b>Adams Street</b>	South city limit	TH 7	McLeod Co
<b>Bluff St NE</b>	TH 7	North city limit	McLeod Co
<b>North High Dr NW/NE</b>	West city limit	East city limit	McLeod Co
<b>South Grade Rd SW</b>	West city limit	School Rd SW	McLeod Co

## Emergency Services

The City of Hutchinson has several relationships with surrounding areas concerning emergency services. For that reason, emergency services dispatchers and officers are responsible for making requests for snow removal and ice control services from the appropriate jurisdiction.

### Service to Private Property

City personnel and personnel contracted by the City do not provide snow removal and ice control services to private properties. Services may, however, be provided with the permission of property owners in situations where City operations directly benefit from operations on private property. Snow removal operations may be conducted on any private property when emergency vehicles responding to a call for service require access to private property. Any operations on or services provided to private property are authorized by the Public Works Department, or are provided at the request of an emergency services officer responding to a call.

### Requests for Services and Complaints

Requests for service and complaints regarding snow removal and ice control operations will be taken during normal working hours. Questions not able to be answered by administrative staff will be forwarded to the Public Works Department. Requests for service and other problems are handled in priority order, in keeping with personnel, equipment, and materials available. Services are prioritized and provided at the discretion of the Public Works Department.

### Review of this Policy

This policy will be reviewed periodically. Comments and complaints regarding this policy received since the last review will be considered during each review. Input from City employees and contractors, members of the public, and other affected parties will be considered. Final revisions to the policy are at the discretion of the City Council.

## Appendix A

### Declaration of Snow Emergency; Parking Prohibited

City Code § 72.15

*DECLARATION OF SNOW EMERGENCY; PARKING PROHIBITED.*

*(A) The City Administrator or other designated official may declare a snow emergency in the city. The emergency shall be declared by 4:00 p.m. and shall take effect later that same evening at 12:00 midnight. The snow emergency shall continue to be in effect for 24 hours.*

*(B) Notice of the declaration of a snow emergency shall be given by notifying the local news media; however the notification shall be a service right only and not a duty on the part of city officials.*

*(C) During a declared snow emergency, no motor vehicle shall be parked on any street or alleyway in the city between the hours of midnight and 7:00 a.m. except as otherwise posted.*

*(D) During a declared snow emergency, any police officer is authorized to have a motor vehicle which is parked in violation of this section removed at the owners' expense.*

*(Ord. 09-0536, passed 12-22-09)*

To comply with the intent of the ordinance, it is the intent of Public Works to follow the procedure outlined below when declaring a snow emergency:

1. Prior to 4:00 p.m. each day, a decision would be made in accordance with the existing Snow/Ice Policy and Ordinances as to whether notification of parking restrictions for upcoming snow/ice maintenance activities was necessary.
2. If weather conditions warrant, notification would be sent, via email, to:
  - a. KDUZ/KARP
  - b. HCVN Cable Channel 7 & 10
  - c. Hutchinson Leader Website
  - d. City of Hutchinson Website
  - e. Designated City staff

In addition, Public Works staff would provide these additional notifications:

- f. Notification of personnel involved in snow removal
- g. Updating a message on a dedicated telephone message line
- h. Updating/initiating any other current or future notification systems that may be implemented

Once notifications are made, the ordinance indicates parking restrictions would begin at 12:00 a.m. and be in effect for the following 24-hour period, with parking being restricted between the hours of 12:00 a.m. and 7:00 a.m.

If necessary, notifications may be made on successive days, prior to the end of the previously announced 24-hour period. Each time a notification is made, the 24-hour period would begin again.

Parking will be restricted on City streets between the hours of midnight and 7:00 a.m. Existing parking regulations, where posted, will also be enforced.

Issues identified by City staff engaged in snow removal operations shall be reported to the senior Public Works employee who shall report said issue to the Police Department.

The intent is to use the notification procedure judiciously, taking into account weather conditions, precipitation type/accumulation, and planned maintenance activities. Generally, a snow emergency will be declared after 4" of snow, periods of severe drifting, or for the necessity of treating roadways for severe slippery conditions.

## Appendix B

### Operation of Road Maintenance Equipment

The goal of all road maintenance operations is effectiveness and safety. Minnesota statutes give considerable leeway to equipment operators engaged in road maintenance. State Statutes recognize the unique circumstances equipment operators encounter while performing road maintenance.

When engaged in snow and ice control or flood control work, equipment is exempt from standard size and weight restrictions. Operators are never exempt from statutes regulating driving under the influence or operations around school busses and in school zones.

*Minnesota Statute §169.035*

*Subdivision 1. **Working on highway.***

*(a) The provisions of this chapter shall not apply to persons, motor vehicles, and other equipment while actually engaged in work upon the highway, except as provided in paragraphs (b) and (c).*

*(b) This chapter shall apply to those persons and vehicles when traveling to or from such work, except that persons operating equipment owned, rented or hired by road authorities shall be exempt from the width, height and length provisions of sections 169.80 and 169.81 and shall be exempt from the weight limitations of this chapter while engaged in snow or ice removal and while engaged in flood control operations on behalf of the state or a local governmental unit.*

*(c) Chapter 169A and section 169.444 apply to persons while actually engaged in work upon the highway.*

The City has established the following guidelines that affect operation of maintenance equipment. The City does recognize that, while performing road maintenance, there will be times when it is not feasible to comply with standard traffic control regulations. In those cases, operators are expected to perform operations with caution and proceed only after consideration is given to the safety of that operation.

Unless specifically stated below, all trucks hauling snow during snow removal operations shall comply with all State traffic regulations.

- a) All standard safety devices on the vehicles shall be functional prior to operating, and shall be used during operations.
- b) When actively being loaded with snow, contract snow haulers shall perform functions under the direction of the snow blower operator loading the truck.
- c) Snow haulers, when actively engaged in hauling snow whether full or empty, may stop at red traffic signals and proceed with caution if there is no oncoming traffic. When moving from one work site to another, such as from downtown to the Civic Arena, operators shall comply with all Minnesota Traffic Statutes.

- d) When actively engaged in removing snow while crossing Main Street, contract snow haulers may engage in blocking maneuvers that allow the snow blower and other trucks to cross Main Street safely.
- e) Any action determined to be necessary by the operator to avoid an accident or to mitigate damage or injury that may result.

Contractors are covered by this Minnesota State statute and City of Hutchinson policy only when actively engaged in work for the City of Hutchinson.