



**CITY OF PLYMOUTH  
DEPARTMENT OF MUNICIPAL SERVICES  
SNOW & ICE CONTROL POLICY**

**Revised: December 2023**

*ORIGINALLY ADOPTED BY THE CITY COMMISSION 12/2/96*

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The City of Plymouth has developed this policy in the interest of protecting the health, safety, and welfare of the residents, businesses, visitors, and employees of the City of Plymouth. This policy has been developed to address known hazards under normal and ideal conditions. It is not practical to attempt to cover every possibility that may arise. While this policy sets minimum standards, the policy does not preclude the use of common sense and additional measures to respond to snow and ice storms. Employees are encouraged to anticipate adverse conditions in any particular area of the City and make appropriate response to those conditions. Employees are authorized to change the priority list as particular situations arise. *(An example of changing the priorities would be to keep the Cultural Center Parking Lot salted on at night while they have activities taking place. A second example would be to drop the school route priority on a weekend.)*

All or parts of this policy may be affected by at least; one or more of the following conditions, which will delay all or some of the services, provided:

- \* Equipment Breakdowns
- \* Vehicles disabled in deep snow or blocking roadways
- \* Weather so severe as to cause crews to be called in from streets; i.e. White out Conditions.
- \* Equipment rendered inadequate by the depths of the snow or drifts.
- \* Crew Breaks and breaks required for safety, refueling, refilling of material spreaders and equipment repairs.
- \* Unforeseen emergencies

**ADVERSE CONDITIONS TO BE MONITORED:**

It shall be the duty of the Municipal Service Supervisors to monitor winter weather conditions and to advance plan for particular storm conditions. Winter storm monitoring shall include gathering data from the National Weather Service, Weather Channel, College or University Weather Information Centers, actual observations, internet links to Doppler radar, weather service radar, television or radio reports and other sources that may contain information vital to advance planning.

During regular hours, the Municipal Services Supervisors, in cooperation with the Police Department on duty staff, shall determine a need for snow and ice control measures. After regular hours, the Police Department on duty staff shall have the responsibility of notifying the Plymouth Community Dispatch Center to make contact with the Municipal Services On-Call employee of a possible need for snow and ice control measures. The Police Department should

be aware of the need to begin snow and ice control measures early in the storm period in order to obtain maximum effectiveness of road salt and other measures.

### **CREWS WORKING AFTER HOURS:**

It shall continue to be the policy of the Department of Municipal Services to make radio contact with the Plymouth Community Dispatch Center when they sign on or off the air. The Municipal Services staff will call the Dispatch Center via radio using the call sign "City DMS." The Municipal Services staff will then inform the Dispatch Center that they are beginning snow & ice response. When signing off after the snow & ice response, the DMS staff will again contact the Dispatch Center to inform them that they are signing off from the detail. The Dispatcher must enter the time that the crews came on the air and when they leave into the daily log. This will allow for a legal documentation should that information be needed in the future.

Making radio contact with the Community Dispatch Center as the crews go on the air will also help add a measure of safety for the employees. The radio will provide employees with a direct contact to the Dispatch Center in the event of an equipment break down or in the event that the snow & ice control crew comes across some hazardous situation needing police, fire or medical response.

If Municipal Services crews are not able to contact the Dispatch Center via radio, they will attempt to make contact via the non-emergency phone number at 734-453-8600. If they are unsuccessful in their multiple attempts to make radio contact, they shall note this information on their daily job assignment log, including the approximate time that they attempted contact with dispatch. In addition to noting on daily job assignment log, Municipal Services Supervisory Staff will be notified the next business day of the unsuccessful radio contact with the Dispatch Center. The Municipal Services Department Supervisory Staff shall make the Police Chief and the City Manager aware of the lack of radio contact with dispatch.

After hours crews are also issued cell phones to allow them the ability to stay in contact with Municipal Services Supervisors, Police Department and/or the Community Dispatch Center as an additional safety measure.

## **SNOW & ICE CONTROL PRIORITY ROUTES:**

This policy shall set up a total of six priority routes for snow and ice control measures, those areas shall be known as:

- \* PRIORITY ROUTE 1 - Major Streets, including; Main, Penniman, Ann Arbor Trail, and Starkweather, City Hall to include PD & FD.
- \* PRIORITY ROUTE 2 - Secondary Streets, including; Harvey, Farmer, Junction, Industrial Drive, Church, Union, Fire Station #3 (Old Village)
- \* PRIORITY ROUTE 3 - School Routes, including; Smith School, East Middle School, OLGC
- \* PRIORITY ROUTE 4 - City Parking Lots and Contracted Service Parking Lots, Including; East Central, Penniman, Tonquish Creek Manor, Cultural Center, Library, Harvey & Wing Lot, Saxton's.
- \* PRIORITY ROUTE 5 - Hills, including; Amelia, Rose, Holbrook, Evergreen, Pacific, New England Village area @ Sheldon
- \* PRIORITY ROUTE 6 – Targeted snow & ice control response

When it becomes necessary to dispatch a DMS Crew member to respond to snow and ice conditions, the crew responding to salt shall work Priorities 1 - 4 as conditions dictate. Typically, priorities 5 & 6 are responded to during regular work hours, after priorities 1 through 4 have been completed.

City Hall has been added to Priority Route 1 as we need to be able to protect our staff; especially the Police and Fire departments to be able to respond in poor weather conditions, as they are both 24 hour operations. Fire Station #3 was added to Priority Route 2.

This policy shall not prohibit employees from completing any combination of Priority Routes at the same time; providing that conditions allow the mixing of Priority Routes. A specific example of mixing priority routes would include allowing employees who are driving the truck/equipment to treat the Cultural Center lot while salting on Farmer St.

Hours of operations of various facilities will also dictate Priority Routes. Employees operating the truck/equipment should be aware of various city operations including, but not limited to; special events, Ice Arena or Room Rentals at Cultural Center, Library Hours of Operations, and merchant's hours of operations. The schedule for schools is also important; obviously it is not necessary to complete the school routes during the Christmas Holiday Break period.

If an employee is working in a single truck/equipment after hours and in the employee's opinion, additional equipment and manpower may be needed to address the snow and ice control measures, the employee shall make contact with the on-call staff via phone or by contacting the Plymouth Community Dispatch Center to ask them to call the Municipal Services On-Call staff to indicate a possible need for additional manpower and equipment. Community Dispatch will

then be responsible for making the necessary notifications. The Municipal Services On-Call staff will then be responsible for calling in additional manpower as needed based on the review of the storm situation.

## **SALT/BRINE:**

Over the last few years, DMS staff has integrated salt brine into the snow & ice control response. The ability to make/store salt brine was installed inside the DMS garage, as well as the purchase of a brine attachment and a pre-wet attachment for the new Swaploader. In addition, two of the other front-line trucks used for snow & ice control were retro fitted to be able to apply brine for parking lots and other smaller areas.

Rock salt is simply crystals of sodium chloride, or table salt, just not as refined. Until rock salt has been formulated into brine, it will do nothing to stop snow from freezing to the roadway. Agencies that use rock salt in their winter maintenance activities are doing so to create brine on the road surface by having rock salt mix with snow, ice or freezing rain.

Salt brine is a solution of salt and water that has a freezing point lower than water alone. In turn, salt brine can reduce snow and ice adhering to road surfaces. As temperatures dip, either the amount of rock salt or the frequency of application must be increased. Anti-icing, which is spraying brine on roadways before the storm arrives, requires approximately one-third to one-fourth the material of deicing, making it the more cost-effective option. This is proactive approach in dealing with a snow and ice event by treating the road surface before the snow falls. By doing so, you are preventing the formation of ice on the road surface and providing additional time for crew(s) to respond with other measures.

## **SNOW PLOWING:**

It shall continue to be the policy of the City of Plymouth to plow all residential streets in the City when more than four (4) inches of snow has fallen. In addition, the Municipal Services Supervisory Staff has the authority to plow all streets if conditions exist where it would seem reasonable to plow streets due to snow conditions or density.

The Department shall not remove snow from alleyways, unless there is an extreme and critical health and safety issue. Alleyways must have snow removed by private contractors if the adjoining property owners desire that service.

In accordance with the Plymouth City Code Section 70-111, the City Manager, as supervisor and director of the public parking system, shall be deemed to have the authority to order the restriction of on-street and municipal parking lot parking by declaring a "Snow Emergency." The declaration of a "Snow Emergency" shall authorize the City Manager to declare that all on street parking or municipal parking lot parking as being prohibited. This authority will allow crews to plow side streets without the hazards of parked cars on the streets. The Snow Emergency Advisory should be issued to area electronic media and distributed on the

City's Email and Fax Alert System, as well as added to the City's social media presence.

#### **CONTRACTS AUTHORIZED:**

The Department of Municipal Services is authorized to render snow and ice control services to other governmental units or public agencies as manpower and equipment allows and providing that the City Priorities can be maintained. Contracting of City services to other governmental units or public agencies (ie-HVA) must be for either fair compensation or in exchange for similar use of the other agency's equipment and manpower (*mutual aid*).

#### **EMERGENCY HEALTH & SAFETY RESPONSE:**

The Department of Municipal Services is authorized to render snow and ice control services on an emergency basis to other governmental agencies including, but not limited to police, fire and emergency medical response agencies. Services can be delivered when requested and only on a time available basis and should only be rendered to protect the public health, safety and welfare. This authorization is for emergency situations only. (*i.e. County salt crew has not responded to Sheldon Road and our Police and/or Fire Department has a call for service.*)

#### **STORM UPDATES:**

Whenever possible, the Department of Municipal Services shall provide, to various public agencies, information on the storm and road conditions in the City. This may be accomplished using the City Fax Update and/or E-Mail Programs and/or social media platforms. These programs are an informational fax or e-mail that is prepared and is computer faxed or e-mailed to agencies including; School Transportation Office, City Police, Community Dispatch Center, Community Fire Department, Chamber of Commerce, Tonquish Creek Manor and others who have requested this service.

#### **TRAINING:**

All Department of Municipal Services employees will annually be trained on the use of the salt and plow trucks and will be made aware of this policy. Employees operating snowplows and salt trucks should be tested annually with documentation in order demonstrate a working knowledge of safe work practices and procedures for snow and ice control.

#### **ADMINISTRATION:**

This policy is to be administered by the City Manager and the Supervisory Staff of the Municipal Services Department.

## **WORST STORMS:**

According to the National Weather Service some of the worst snowstorms that have hit the Metro Area have included the following:

- April 6, 1886 - more than 24 inches
- December 1 – 2, 1974 - 19.3 inches
- December 31, 2013 – January 2, 2014 – 11.1 inches
- January 4-5, 2014 – 10.6 inches
- February 1, 2015 – 16.7 inches

## **RESIDENTIAL OR COMMERCIAL SIDEWALK SNOW REMOVAL REQUIRED:**

The Code of Ordinances for the City of Plymouth Sections 62-89 and 62-90 requires that “Every owner or occupant of any lot or parcel of land adjoining any street or public place in the city along or across which there shall be a sidewalk shall, **within 24 hours after** the same has fallen or formed, remove or cause to be removed any snow or ice which may have fallen or accumulated...and in case of neglect or refusal so to do the City Manager may forthwith cause the removal of same and the expense thereof shall be a lien upon such premises.”

Failure by a property owner or occupant to clear the sidewalks shall cause the City or a City contractor to clear the sidewalks and bill for the removal. This policy hereby establishes the following fee schedule:

First offense = Minimum billing of \$200.00

Second offense = Minimum billing of \$250.00

Third offense & subsequent offenses = Minimum billing of \$400.00

Actual billing will be based on the current hourly rates for manpower, equipment and material; however, in any case, the billing shall not be less than \$200.00 for the first offense, \$250.00 for the second offense and \$400.00 for the third and any subsequent offenses. The determination of the number offenses will be tallied from the date of this policy and will end with the adoption of this policy for the next season. Failure to pay the billing will result in the bill being placed on the tax roll and as a lien against the property.

## **DUMPING OR PUSHING OF SNOW ONTO THE STREETS IS NOT ALLOWED:**

Sections 62-39 and 62-40 of the City of Plymouth Code of Ordinances do not allow the pushing or dumping of snow from any privately owned premises into or onto any street. Most commonly, a private contractor may push snow from a parking lot into the street. These sections of the City of Plymouth Code of Ordinances forbid this type of action. If violations must be corrected by the City the minimum charge for this service shall be \$250.00. Actual billing will be based on the current hourly rates for manpower, equipment and material; however, in any case, the billing shall not be less than \$250.00. Further, violators may be subject to violations of various traffic laws and would be subject to ticketing as deemed appropriate by the Police Department.

