

**PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT
CITY OF RICHFIELD**

DATE: 11/29/2023

SUBJECT: Snow Removal and Ice Control Policy

Purpose

The purpose of this Snow Removal and Ice Control Policy (“Policy”) is to define and outline snow removal and ice control objectives and procedures as established by the City of Richfield (“City”) and the Public Works Department (“Department”).

Introduction

The City assumes basic responsibility for snow removal on City streets, City sidewalks/trails/cycle tracks, and City-owned public parking lots. The City assumes basic responsibility for ice control and mitigation on City streets and City-owned public parking lots, but does not salt or sand City sidewalks/trails/cycle tracks. Reasonable snow removal and ice control is necessary for routine travel and emergency services. The City strives to provide this service in a timely, safe, and cost-effective manner while 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 use private contractors when necessary.

This Policy supersedes written or unwritten policies of the City and Department regarding snow removal and ice control. This Policy does not relieve the operators of private vehicles, pedestrians, property owners, residents, and all others that may be using public streets, sidewalks, and trails or that may otherwise be affected by snow/ice removal operations, of their responsibility to act in a reasonable, prudent, and cautious manner given the prevailing weather and street conditions.

Policy

The Deputy Public Works Director, under the direction of the Public Works Director, will make decisions as to time, method, and materials used on snow removal and ice control operations. The Deputy Public Works Director is responsible for coordinating equipment and personnel, and assigning work based on the need for snow removal and ice control within the City. The Deputy Public Works Director maintains the authority to delegate any of the responsibilities laid out in this policy to appropriate Department staff.

The Department will only conduct snow and ice control operations when weather conditions do not endanger the safety of employees or equipment and operations are effective. Factors that may delay snow and ice control operations include:

- Severe cold
- Significant winds
- Limited visibility
- Rapid accumulation of snow and/or ice
- Traffic conditions (e.g., rush hour)

The Department continuously monitors forecasts and weather conditions to aid in mobilization decisions. The Department will use multiple sources for storm warning preparedness, including, but not limited to the following:

- National Weather Service (www.weather.gov)
- Hennepin County Emergency Management
- Local News Weather Reports
- Various weather-related web sites

Planning and Scheduling

Snow removal and ice control operations may occur during assigned work shifts or, in some situations, on a call back of workers. When conditions allow, work schedules will be arranged to keep overtime at a minimum, with overtime scheduling being approved by the Deputy Public Works Director. The Deputy Public Works Director will notify the Public Works Director of any unusual amount of overtime to be performed and the reasons for the overtime.

The Deputy Public Works Director retains the authority to alter assignments based on weather conditions, equipment and personnel availability, and other conditions related to snow removal and ice control.

Mobilization

Mobilization of employees is the responsibility of the Deputy Public Works Director. The Deputy Public Works Director will determine the dispatching of equipment for City streets, City sidewalks/trails, and City-owned public parking lots.

The Deputy Public Works Director will keep the Public Works Director informed of the start, progress, and completion of full-scale snow removal and ice control operations.

Initiating Operations

The start of snow removal and ice control operations depends upon current and anticipated conditions. The Deputy Public Works Director will decide when to initiate snow removal and ice control operations. Snow removal and ice control operations may be initiated any time they are deemed to be beneficial to the City. Some criteria for the decision are:

- Appreciable snow accumulation on roads and sidewalks
- Drifting of snow that causes travel problems
- Icy conditions which seriously impact travel
- Timing of snowfall in relation to heavy use of streets (e.g., rush hour)
- Forecasted and anticipated changes in weather conditions

Snow Route Assignment and Planning

Each year, the Department prepares a map of the street system, sidewalk/trail system, and public properties serviced by the City. These maps identify route areas that identify personnel, equipment, and, if necessary, the private contractors used to provide the

services. Annually, the Department revises route areas to correspond with budget, equipment, personnel, and other resources available to the City.

The Department identifies priority routes and hazards within each route area. These route areas are generally assigned to individuals and are used for planning and executing routine snow removal and ice control operations.

Street Snow Removal Routes

The Department has classified City streets based on the street function, traffic volume, and importance to the welfare of the community. The priority of snow removal routes are as follows:

1. Minor arterial roads: high-volume routes that connect the urban service area to cities inside and outside of the region
2. Collector streets: streets providing access between neighborhoods, minor business concentrations, and schools
3. Low-volume local streets
4. City parking lots, alleys, sidewalks, and trails

Emergency services officers may contact the Department to dispatch workers and equipment to provide services for emergency vehicles (i.e. police, fire, ambulance, equipment needed for electrical outages, gas leaks, etc.) responding to emergencies within the City. The Department will dispatch necessary workers and equipment as soon as possible.

Sidewalk/Trail/Cycle Tracks Snow Removal Routes

Priorities for snow removal on sidewalks are set to accommodate the needs of the mass transit public. During any given snow event, seven (7) pieces of equipment are dispatched to clear sidewalks, trails, and cycle tracks. In the event of a major snow event (six (6) inches or more) one side of each arterial street will be plowed, until all arterial roads are cleared. General priority for clearing sidewalks, trails, and cycle tracks is as follows:

1. Arterial roads
2. Collector streets
3. Residential neighborhoods

Sidewalk/Trail/Cycle Tracks Ice Policy

In effort to best utilize the City's finite resources and prioritize snow and ice removal in high-impact areas as outlined throughout this Policy, the Department will not apply salt, sand, or other de-icing chemicals to sidewalks/trails/cycle tracks. Due to the ever-changing nature of the Minnesota climate, the physical and financial cost of keeping all sidewalks/trails/cycle tracks free of ice at all times would substantially outweigh the benefit to the community. In addition, salt, sand, and other de-icing agents have adverse effects on the local environment. Application of these substances is imprecise and may result in negative effects to adjacent green space and/or infiltration into ground water. Residents and business owners are encouraged to make sure sidewalks adjacent to their properties are ice free or otherwise safe for passage.

Transit Accommodations

In addition to plowing sidewalks in the most heavily used areas first, the Department employs a Sentencing to Service crew through Hennepin County four days per week, whose primary task in the winter months is to clear bus stops of snow and ice for mass transit users. The Sentencing to Service crew works a defined schedule so it can take up to three days before some transit stops are cleared, depending on the timing of snowfall in relation to the schedule.

Equipment Inspection

The Department mechanics conduct a thorough inspection of all snow and ice related vehicles and equipment prior to the start of the snow season. In addition, all trucks are annually certified through the Minnesota State Patrol Mandatory Inspection Program.

The Department also conducts daily inspections of snow and ice related vehicles and equipment during the snow season. Operators of the vehicles and equipment record their daily inspections and the status of the vehicle.

Equipment Calibration

The Department calibrates all salting vehicles prior to the start of the snow season to ensure efficient and effective application. Calibration will also occur if there is a major hydraulic repair or service needed on the vehicle.

Other Responsible Entities

Other governmental entities maintain certain streets within the City, which includes snow and ice removal. The Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) and the Hennepin County Highway Department maintain separate maintenance policies for streets they maintain within the City. 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.

Hennepin County maintains streets on **Penn Ave, Nicollet Ave, and Portland Ave** from Trunk Highway 62 to Interstate 494 in Richfield, as well as the entirety of **66th Street** in Richfield and into Edina.

MnDOT is responsible for all freeway on/off ramps on Trunk Highways 62 and 77 and Interstates 35W and 494 in Richfield.

Responsibility varies between **Richfield, Hennepin County, and Bloomington** for sidewalks along interstate/trunk highway overpasses and underpasses.

The table below summarizes the entity responsible for clearing sidewalks.

Sidewalks on overpasses	Entity
494/Penn	Hennepin County
494/Portland	Hennepin County
494/Nicollet	Hennepin County
62/Penn	Hennepin County
62/Portland	Hennepin County
77/66 th Street	Hennepin County

494/Lyndale	Bloomington
494/12 th Ave	Bloomington
76 th Street/35W	Richfield
Sidewalks on underpasses	Entity
62/Lyndale	Richfield
62/Nicollet	Richfield
66 th Street/35W	Richfield

Private Contractors Providing Snow Removal Services

Richfield City Code, Subsection 930.17, limits the operation of vehicles for snow plowing on private property in residential districts and within fifty (50) feet of such districts to the period between 6:00AM and 10:00PM any day of the week.

Post-Snowfall Events

Operators conduct follow-up plowing as needed. Generally, further clearing takes place where cars were parked, at intersections, etc. Additional salting of intersections may occur at this time as well.

Snow and Ice Control Materials

The City does not have a “bare pavement” policy. The Department will wait for snowfall to cease or accumulate sufficiently before initiating snow removal. General snowpack will remain on City streets and sidewalks in many cases.

The Department will use snow and ice control materials when there are hazardous ice or slippery conditions on streets. The Department may use other minerals, chemicals, and mixtures to assist in ice control provided they have an equivalent or lesser effect on the environment than salting and are economically feasible. The Department is concerned with the effect of chemicals on the environment; therefore, it will limit its use of such chemicals.

The Department initiates salting operations to melt ice on City streets. The Department will apply snow and ice control materials at times and rates that maximize effectiveness and generally limit application to:

- Intersections
- Hazardous areas
- Isolated, slippery areas

The Department may order use of additional salt if pavement, air temperatures, or precipitation type warrant. The Department has adopted salt application best practices as stated in the Minnesota Snow and Ice Control Handbook.

The City does not employ salt or other ice control measures on sidewalks/trails/cycle tracks in the City.

Refreeze Conditions

It is not possible or practical for snow and ice to be completely removed from all sidewalks or prevent melting snow or ice from refreezing on sidewalks. Users of sidewalk and trail facilities are expected at all times to be mindful of current conditions and avoid hazards to remain safe.

Material Handling and Storage

Salt stockpiles are stored on-site (approximately 300 tons) in an enclosed structure at the Public Works maintenance facility. These stockpiles are routinely replenished to meet the needs of the winter season with the goal of having minimal salt in the bins by the end of the season. During the off-season, salt at the Public Works maintenance facility is tarped and stored inside a covered structure. No other materials or supplies are stored in the structure containing the salt.

Spreading and Plowing Procedures

The Department will plow snow in a manner that minimizes traffic obstructions. The center of the roadway will be plowed first, and then the snow will be plowed from left to right so the snow discharges onto the boulevard. When plowing on bridges, operators will adjust their speed to reduce or eliminate a snow wake from going over the side of the bridge. Snow on dead-end streets will generally be plowed to the end of the roadway and snow on cul-de-sacs will be plowed to the middle of the cul-de-sac.

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. Sidewalks will be cleared after roadways are cleared. The City recognizes the inconvenience that comes from snow piling up on driveways due to plowing activities, but the City is not responsible for removing this accumulated snow.

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 standard traffic laws, when, in their judgement, it is safe to disregard such laws.

Hauling of Snow and Snow Storage

From time to time, the Department will remove snow where space does not allow for snow to be pushed or piled outside the driving lanes by hauling to another location. The Deputy Public Works Director will determine when snow will be removed by truck from the boulevard area. Snow hauling operations will not commence until other snow/ice removal operations have been completed. Snow hauling operations may also be delayed depending on weather conditions, personnel, and budget availability. The snow will be removed and hauled to a snow storage area. The snow storage zone will be located in an area that minimizes environmental impact.

Snow Emergencies

Snow Emergency Procedures

Concurrent with the above policy, the following are additional City practices employed during a declared snow emergency (see City Code, Subsection 1305.13).

Snow Emergency Notifications

A snow emergency is declared by the City Manager, or designee. Declaration of a snow emergency can be found at the following:

- a. Contact the Snow Emergency Line at 612-861-9178
- b. Visit the City Website at www.richfieldmn.gov
- c. Sign up for e-update on the City website at www.richfieldmn.gov/residents/e-notification
- d. Local news channels
 - i. WCCO
 - ii. KMSP
 - iii. KSTP
 - iv. KARE 11
- e. Social Media (Facebook, "X" or Twitter)

Parking Limitations

Vehicles parked on the roadway during a snow or ice event may impair the effectiveness of snow and ice control and removal. Richfield City Code, Subsection 1305.13, prohibits on-street parking during a snow emergency. A snow emergency is in effect after a snowfall of four (4) or more inches and/or upon the declaration of a snow emergency by the City Manager, or designee, and continues until the street has been plowed curb-to-curb.

Richfield City Code, Section 1315, permits certain vehicles to park in the front yard areas of residential districts of the City during a snow emergency, subject to the following conditions:

- a. The vehicle must be parked as close as possible to the established driveway area serving the property on which, or in front of which, it is parked;
- b. Permission of the property owner must be obtained;
- c. The vehicle must be parked at least eight (8) feet back from the curblines, and five (5) feet back from any public sidewalk;
- d. The vehicle may not be parked off of an established driveway within the area bounded by the street curblines abutting said corner lot and a line connecting points on the abutting curblines of fifty (50) feet from the point of intersection of the extensions of the curblines; and
- e. Movement to and from the parking area must be over the established driveway rather than over the curb.

The owner of the property shall repair any damage to the adjacent boulevard area caused by parking in the front yard areas of residential districts.

Snow Emergency Parking Areas

Snow emergency parking areas will be available for a total of 24 hours after a snow emergency is declared. Snow emergency parking area signs will mark those areas where parking is allowed. The City of Richfield's website will indicate the specific time at which a snow emergency was declared, or residents can call the Richfield Snow Information Hotline at 612-861-9178. After the 24 hour snow emergency parking area period has expired, the city will begin clearing snow in these areas and any cars that remain are subject to a ticket and tow, per normal procedure. For these parking areas to

work correctly, it is important that residents promptly retrieve their vehicles after their street or parking lot has been cleared.

The City Manager has designated the following stretches of roadway as snow emergency parking areas:

- Cedar Avenue—East side, from 66th Street to Diagonal Boulevard
- Cedar Avenue—Both sides, from 67th Street to 75th Street

These snow emergency parking areas are clearly marked with a snow emergency parking area sign.

Private Property

Snow Removal on Private Properties

It is a public nuisance and violation of City Code, Subsection 830.41, to shovel, plow, or cast snow or ice from private property onto a public street, alley, sidewalk, boulevard, or public parking lot. It is allowable to remove snow or ice from a private driveway or walkway and deposit the snow or ice on the portion of the boulevard immediately adjacent to the private property. Pushing, piling, or storing snow in or across the street is prohibited.

Service to Private Property

City personnel and any 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 the 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 Department or are provided at the request of any emergency services officer responding to a call.

Snow Operation Damages

Snow removal and ice control operations can cause damage to property, even under the best circumstances and care by vehicle and equipment operators. Most often, damage occurs to property improvements in the City right-of-way, which generally extends eight (8) to twelve (12) 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. However, the City will make its best effort to repair damaged grass along curb lines and sidewalk edges using black dirt and seeding.

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. Any property damage claims allegedly resulting from City snow plowing activities must be filed with the City's insurance through the Human Resources Department

When disagreement about the responsibility for the damage occurs, the Department will investigate and decide responsibility.

Equipment operators and contractors are directed to immediately contact their supervisor and the supervisor will contact the Department and Police 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.

Service Requests and Complaints

The Department will take service requests and complaints regarding snow removal and ice control operations during normal working hours. The Department will prioritize service requests and provide resolution at their discretion, in keeping with available personnel, equipment, and materials. The Deputy Public Works Director will receive and respond to service requests or complaints that the administrative staff is unable to answer.

Policy Review

The Department will review this policy annually. The Department will keep on file written comments and complaints received regarding this policy. Any review will consider comments or complaints received since the last review. The review will also consider input from City employees and contractors, members of the public, and other affected parties.