

CITY OF ST. MICHAEL SNOWPLOWING POLICY

Adopted by the City Council on November 10, 1997
Revised and Adopted by the City Council on December 28, 2004

City of St. Michael Snowplowing Policy

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I. Introduction

Keeping roads clear of ice and snow in Minnesota can be a six-month long effort. While most snowfalls are relatively routine maintenance activities, certain conditions (for example rain/ice, wind combined with deep snow) can make the job of clearing the roads very difficult.

The City of St. Michael maintains over 100 miles of roads. Residents expect to have their roads plowed in a reasonable amount of time. To do this, decisions need to be made when to commence plowing, how much sanding, which roads are plowed first, estimated costs, etc. This policy has been prepared to set procedures and practices to provide safe winter driving conditions on City roads. It is based on past practices of the City Road Department, input by residents, and a report by the Office of the State Auditor, entitled “Snow and Ice Control – A Best Practices Review.”

The City currently utilizes a combination of City employees and contracted snowplow operators for its snow removal operations. Generally, the Contractor handles the sidewalks of St. Michael. City employees take care of City roads and trails. The City also has a separate agreement with MnDOT for plowing TH241. The Contractors work under the direction of the Public Works Supervisor, and/or Lead Heavy Equipment Operator. Other Public Works Employees and Contractors will be expected to make decisions when the Public Works Supervisor, and/or Lead Heavy Equipment Operator are not available, based on past practice and this policy.

II. Level of Service

The intent of this policy is to provide safe winter driving conditions. The level of service described herein shall be considered a guideline with the understanding that immediately after a storm the level of service provided may be less than described herein and may vary across the City depending on localized storm conditions and other circumstances.

Streets shall be plowed and/or sanded to provide as safe of intersections, approaches or curves as conditions allow. Gravel roads shall be plowed to provide a hard packed surface. Sand and/or abrasives will be spread as necessary for traction. Chemicals (salt) may be used to achieve the conditions stated and to provide workable stockpiles.

During light to normal snowfall, streets shall be plowed their full width as soon after the initial pass as possible. During heavier snowfalls, streets shall be widened as the storm intensity lessens. After the storm passes, clean-up operations shall begin to clear intersections and snow storage areas along corners and road right-of-ways. It is the City’s intent to complete the initial plowing and widening operations within twenty-four (24) hours of the storm. Clean-up operations should be complete within twenty-four (24) hours for light snowfalls and within seventy-two (72) hours for heavy snowfalls. Extreme weather conditions (blizzards, high winds, ice/rain or other unusual weather events) may require additional time to complete the snow/ice removal operation. No two winter storms are identical, therefore different conditions may require different responses.

III. Commencement of Snowplowing Operations

Snow plowing and/or ice control operations shall commence under the direction of the Public Works Supervisor and/or Lead Heavy Equipment Operator. The Public Works Supervisor, and/or Lead Heavy Equipment Operator will decide when to commence snow or ice control operations based on his/her judgment of current and predicted weather conditions and the policies as herein set forth. The contractor may also commence snowplowing operations for his route if he is unable to contact the Public Works Supervisor, and/or Lead Heavy Equipment Operator using this policy as a guide.

The criteria for the decision to begin snow and/or ice control operations is as follows:

- Snow accumulation of 2 inches or more warrants the plowing of asphalt roads, and 4 inches warrants the plowing of both asphalt and gravel roads. Call out is normally at 3 a.m. when practical (snowfall is over). It is advisable to plow at this time if possible, because traffic is minimal. Also, roads will be open for the morning commute.
- Drifting snow may also warrant commencement of operations depending upon conditions.
- Icing and/or freezing rains may warrant commencement of sanding operations depending upon the extent and conditions.
- Public Works Supervisor, and/or Lead Heavy Equipment Operator, or his/her designated representative, shall determine the time to begin operations.
- Operations will continue until all roads are passable. Widening and clean-up of operations may continue immediately or on the following working day(s) depending upon conditions and circumstances.

IV. Suspension of Snowplowing Operations

The criteria for the suspension of operations is as follows:

- Safety of the plow operators and the public is important. Therefore, snowplowing operations may be terminated after 12-14 hours to allow personnel adequate time for rest. There may be instances where this is not possible depending on storm conditions and other circumstances.
- High winds creating white out conditions could cause suspension of plowing operations until weather conditions improve.

V. Snowplowing Priorities

The City of St. Michael's snowplowing priorities are as follows (the lower the number, the higher the priority):

1. Fire Hall
2. High volume major collector roads, roads with steep hills and curves, roads serving commercial businesses.
3. Residential streets.
4. City Parking Lots, and grounds.
5. Cartway type roads that terminate in a dead-end.
6. Sidewalks and trails.
7. Widening or “winging” roads may continue several days after a large snowfall or after high winds.

VI. Plow Routes

The City of St. Michael has set 13 different snowplow routes, 11 for employees (10-Road, 1-Trail) and two for the sidewalk contractor. Snow accumulation of 2 inches or more warrants the plowing of both asphalt and gravel roads. Call out is normally at 3 a.m. when practical. Figure 1 shows the plow routes for the Contractor and City Employees respectively.

The Public Works Supervisor and plow operator will determine plow routes and sequencing of operations. A copy of such routes is on file in the City Administrator’s office after the plow route and sequencing of operations plan has been approved by the City Council. The Public Works Supervisor shall retain the latitude to adjust sequencing or route assignments based on storm conditions, equipment or operator availability, and/or other conditions warranting changes.

VII. Sanding

Hills, curves and intersections are normally sanded during snowplowing operations when trucks are used. During heavy snowfall, when the grader, tractor and loaders are used, sanding may become a separate operation.

- It should be noted that certain weather conditions (primarily rain followed by excessively cold temperatures) could make it impossible to keep roads completely ice-free. Chemicals are effective only to about 10 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Sanding operations may commence at the direction of the Public Works Supervisor, and/or Lead Heavy Equipment Operator with any ice conditions due to normal freezing/thawing and freezing rain.

VIII. Parking Regulations

- No parking on City streets from November 1st through April 1st from 2:00 a.m. – 6:00 a.m., except downtown commuter parking areas which are 2:00 a.m. – 5:00 a.m.
- After November 1st, but before the first snowfall, vehicles in violation may receive warning tags to remind the public of no parking restrictions.

IX. Resident Responsibilities

The City requests the following from residents:

- Keep updated on current and predicted weather conditions.

- Be aware of the snow removal equipment and please don't crowd the plow.
- Expect snow removal equipment to back up frequently.
- Park vehicles off the street and road right-of-ways and cul-de-sacs.
- Be patient – plowing and sanding takes time.
- DO NOT** plow snow across city roads. Frozen snow and ruts from leftover snow can damage and/or throw the snowplow into the ditch.
- DO NOT** push or blow snow onto City streets.
- Clean snow from around fire hydrants and mailboxes.
- Group mailboxes at the end of cul-de-sacs (left hand side) when possible.
- Place garbage and recycling containers away from the edge of the road so they don't get covered by snow.
- Snow plowing will cause additional snow to be deposited in driveways and around roadside obstacles. Residents should be aware that they may need to clear their driveways several times until their street has been plowed and winged its full width.
- Decorative rock, landscaping plant gardens, lawn sprinkler heads, posts, fences, or other obstruction to snowplowing operations are not allowed in the right-of-way. These items need to be removed if viewed as a snow removal hazard by the Public Works Supervisor at the cost of the resident.

X. Property Damage

The City practices the following property damage policy:

- If placed 42 inches above the curb (or roadway if no curb exists) per City Ordinance, mailboxes, newspaper boxes and posts physically hit by a plow will be repaired or replaced by the City (up to a maximum cost of \$250.00) as time permits. Damage caused by the weight of the snow **IS NOT** the responsibility of the City.
- Boulevard damage determined by the Public Works Supervisor to be caused by City plows is repaired by the City with black dirt and seed in the spring of each year.
- Sprinkler damage determined by the Public Works Supervisor to be caused by City plows is repaired by the City in the spring of each year if the Public Works Supervisor is notified of the damage.

XI. Equipment Used for Snow Removal

The following is the current inventory of snow removal equipment owned by the City:

<u>Streets</u>	<u>Trails and Parking Lots</u>
1997 Tandem Truck	1994 Chevrolet 4WD Pickup
1999 Tandem Truck	1990 Ford Tractor
2000 Tandem Truck	2003 Kubota Tractor
2002 Tandem Truck	
2004 Tandem Truck	
1988 Single Axle Truck	
1999 612 Loader	
2001 612 Loader	
2003 712 Loader	

1998 John Deere Tractor
1992 CAT Grader

Additional equipment is also used by the sidewalk contractor.

XII. Emergency Snowplow Procedures

The City has experienced some particularly difficult snowplowing events, which has prevented the City from clearing roads for a number of days. For example, in the Halloween Storm of 1991, the roads could not be cleared because of the combination of the initial rain, excessive snow, very low temperatures and high winds.

For such events, the City may want to institute the following emergency procedures to keep residents informed:

- The Mayor and Administrator may declare a snow emergency after discussing the matter with the Public Works Supervisor, and/or Lead Heavy Equipment Operator.
- No unnecessary travel is advised.
- The City Administrator should attempt to keep residents informed about current conditions and progress of clearing the roads.
- The City Administrator should keep the City Council informed about current conditions and progress to clear roads.
- The City may also decide to inform the media in extreme circumstances.
- The Mayor will cancel the snow emergency when conditions improve enough so travel is again possible.
- If there is a medical or other emergency situation where police, fire or other emergency vehicles are unable to reach a resident or business, road maintenance personnel are authorized to make every effort to allow emergency vehicles to obtain access.

Adopted by the City Council of the City of St. Michael, this 28th day of December 2004.

Attest:

City Administrator

Mayor