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Snow Plowing and Ice Control Policy

1. Introduction

The City of Albertville, Minnesota, finds that it is in the best interest of the residents of the City to assume basic responsibility for control of snow and ice on city streets. Reasonable ice and snow control are necessary for routine travel and emergency services. The City will attempt to 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. This policy does not relieve the operator of private vehicles, pedestrians, property owners, residents and all others that may be using public streets, of their responsibility to act in a reasonable, prudent and cautious manner, given the prevailing street conditions. This policy does not apply to public ice rinks.

The City does not guarantee the streets and sidewalks to be free of snow and ice at all times.

2. When Will the City Start Snow or Ice Control Operations?

The Public Works Street Supervisor will decide when to begin snow or ice control operations. The criteria for that decision are:

- A. Snow accumulation of two (2) inches or more;
- B. Drifting of snow that causes problems for travel;
- C. Icy conditions which seriously affect travel; and
- D. Time of snowfall in relationship to heavy use of streets.

When necessary, the Street Supervisor may delegate the responsibility of deciding when to begin snow or ice control to another public works employee.

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 two (2) inches.

3. How Snow will be Plowed

Snow will be plowed in a manner so as to minimize traffic obstructions. Generally, the center of the roadway will be plowed first and the snow then is 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 area of the street. Snow on cul-de-sacs will normally be plowed onto the boulevard and piled between driveways to provide the largest turning radius possible for emergency vehicle ingress and egress. In times of extreme snowfall, streets will not always immediately be able to be completely cleared of snow.

Gravel roads shall be plowed to provide a hard packed surface. Gravel roads will not be plowed if the roadbed is too soft or plowing is likely to rut or damage the road.

4. Snow Removal

The Public Works Street Supervisor will determine if and when snow will be removed from the area by truck. 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 create a 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 availability. The snow will be removed and hauled to a snow storage area. The snow storage area will be located so as to minimize environmental problems.

5. Priorities and Schedule of Streets to be Plowed

The Public Works Street Supervisor has the responsibility of determining plow routes and sequencing of operations. The Public Works Supervisor shall maintain a general plan detailing routes and sequencing. The Public Works Supervisor may modify routes and sequencing base on storm conditions, resource availability, and/or other conditions requiring a change.

Generally, priority will be based on 1) the street function, traffic volume and importance to the welfare of the community, 2) access to schools and commercial businesses, 3) low volume residential streets, and 4) City parking lot.

During significant and severe storms, the City must be prepared to move personnel and equipment to maintain priority routes first. In fulfilling the need to have all priority streets safe and passable, when resources are limited, plowing of all other streets may be stopped at any time so resources can be shifted to priority routes.

Unforeseeable circumstances may cause delays in completing assigned plow routes. Such circumstances may include weather conditions that endanger the safety of snowplow operators and/or safe and effective operation of equipment, commuter traffic, disabled vehicles, school and bus stop schedules, poor visibility conditions, parked cars along streets, assistance to emergency response vehicles, equipment breakdown, and personnel shortages.

6. Work Schedule for Snowplow Operators

Snowplow operators will be expected to work their assigned shifts. In severe snow emergencies, operators sometimes have to work longer shifts, but will be paid overtime for hours in excess of 40 per week. However, because of budget and safety concerns, no operator shall work more than a twelve-hour shift in any twenty-four hour period. While work breaks are not guaranteed, generally operators will take breaks in accordance with City policy, provided the breaks do not interfere with City services or operations. In addition, operators will be allowed sufficient time to eat a meal during any shift which is eight or more hours. After a twelve-hour shift, the operators will be replaced if additional qualified personnel are available.

7. 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.

8. Parking Restrictions

On-street parking is not compatible with efficient snow plowing operations. Vehicles left parked on the street for extended periods of time create problems for snowplows, as well as safety problems with packed snow and ice around the vehicle. Ticketing and or towing these vehicles may occur in conformance with City ordinance. Additionally, after large accumulations of snow, the City may find it advisable to prescribe parking restrictions to facilitate snow plowing and clean-up operations.

Winter Parking Restrictions are governed by City Code: 7-2-5.

Parking is prohibited on any City street from 2 am to 6 am from November 1st to March 31st. Also, no vehicles shall be parked on any City street after a snowfall of two (2) inches or more until the street has been cleared.

9. Weather Conditions

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

10. Use of Sand, Salt, and Other Chemicals

The City will use sand, salt, and other chemicals when there are 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.

11. Sidewalks and Parking Lots

The City will plow some of the sidewalks and public parking lots in the City. The City does not provide ice control on public sidewalks. The list of those maintained is as follows:

Sidewalks

- Main Avenue NE, from County Road 37 to 50th Street NE
- 50th Street NE, from Barthel Industrial Drive to Main Avenue NE
- 53rd Street NE, Main Avenue NE to Lachman Avenue NE
- 57th Street NE, from Main Avenue NE to County Road 19
- Lachman Avenue NE, from 57th Street NE to 60th Street NE
- LaCentre Avenue NE, from 57th Street NE to southern limit

Public Parking Lots

- City Hall
- Fire Hall
- Public Works/WWTP
- Central Park
- 5975 and 5964 Main Avenue NE (both City owned)

As there are a limited number of personnel available, the City will typically plow these sidewalks after the streets have been plowed. It is the responsibility of the resident and/or property owner to remove all accumulated snow from all other sidewalks along public streets adjoining their property. This includes any snow plowed from public streets onto the sidewalk.

12. Responsibility of Residents

Snowstorms create numerous problems and inconveniences. This policy has identified streets, sidewalks, and parking lots that the City will clear. The residents will also have certain responsibilities. These include clearing their own driveways and private sidewalks, clearing area for trash cans, and clearing around mailboxes and/or newspaper delivery tubes adjacent to their property. These areas should be cleared without depositing any snow into the street. These also must not be any large piles, which obstruct vision of driveways or walks. Trash cans must not be placed on the street surfaces nor on sidewalks. The City will not clear private drives or walks.

Snow plowing can cause additional snow to be deposited in driveway approaches and around roadside obstructions. Operators are instructed to attempt to minimize these instances, however, it is not practical to eliminate the situation. Residents should be aware that they may have to clear their driveways a second, or third time after their street has been plowed.

Residents should also be aware that snowplows frequently will be operating in directions contrary to the normal flow of traffic. Residents have the responsibility to observe the operational modes of the snowplow operators.

13. Mailboxes and Other Private Improvements in the City Right-of-Way

Snow plowing and ice control operations can cause property damage even under the best of circumstances and care on the part of the operators. The major types of damages are to improvements in the City right-of-way. The intent of the right-of-way is to provide room for snow storage, utilities, boulevard trees, sidewalks and other public uses. However, certain private improvements, such as mailboxes, are required in this area. Notwithstanding, mailboxes should be constructed sturdily enough to withstand snow rolling off a plow or wing. In all events, damage to trees, shrubbery, boulevard sod, sprinkler heads and systems, and other landscaping, and damage resulting from snow is the responsibility of the residents and will not be considered for compensation.

Damage to a mailbox is a risk that snowplow operators face during their winter plowing requirements. The City will conduct a review of each mailbox damage claim to determine, whether the City has any legal responsibility for the damage and if so, to repair, replace or provide reimbursement for the mailbox. If the City, in its discretion, determines that reimbursement or replacement is appropriate, the City may:

1. At the mailbox owner's request, 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 which will be installed by the City;
2. Provide reimbursement in a reasonable amount for the mailbox and support posts that meet the City's ordinance standards, as well as state and federal requirements for mailbox size, support and placement.

14. Fire Hydrants

The City will maintain snow clearance necessary for the successful operation of fire hydrants within public right of way; however, no person shall deposit or cause to be deposited any snow and/or ice on or against a fire hydrant.

15. Complaint Procedure

Complaints will be reviewed and logged by the Public Works Street Supervisor. Calls requiring service will be assigned to the appropriate supervisor for scheduling and repair. Emergency complaints will be handled in an expeditious manner as resources are available.

16. Deviation from Policy

The Public Works Streets Supervisor may deviate from this policy when in his or her judgment it is in the best interest of the City or is necessary because of budget needs or other circumstances. Changes in priorities (lasting more than 4 hours) will be documented as to what caused such actions, why the change was necessary, and for how long the change is to be in effect. Those City employees and/or contractors affected will be notified immediately by radio or cell phone of such changes. Any changes of priorities lasting more than 24 hours should be made in a written record, and the public should be informed of such changes through normal methods used by the City for emergency notifications.

17. Review and Modification of Policy

The Public Works Streets Supervisor shall keep on file all comments and complaints received regarding this policy. The policy will be reviewed periodically. Any review will consider comments and complaints since the last review and any other factors affecting the policy or its implementation.

Resolution No. 2016-001
Adopted January 4, 2016