

## **Snow & Ice Control Policy**

### **1. Introduction**

The City of College Place believes 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 snow and ice control is necessary for routine travel and emergency services. The City will 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. While the City is committed to providing the best services possible, everyone should work together to help out as they are able.

Winter weather in the Walla Walla Valley is often unpredictable and comes in a variety of forms. Winter weather poses unique challenges to crews tasked with keeping city roads clear and passable. Each winter weather event is different. Thus, response efforts will likely vary accordingly.

### **2. Decision Criteria for Snow and Ice Control Operations:**

- Snow accumulation of four (4) or more inches
- Drifting of snow that causes problems for travel
- Icy conditions which seriously affect travel
- Time of snowfall in relationship to heavy use of streets
- Staffing
- Budget

Snow and ice control operations are expensive and involve the use of limited personnel and equipment. Consequently, snow and ice control operations will be directed by the Public Works Director or designee. It is not always possible to eliminate slippery roads. Crews will attempt to reduce the impacts of snow and ice by plowing, and/or applying sand and/or salt to city streets. Regardless of road conditions, each driver must decide if he/she is capable of safely driving before doing so.

### **3. Snow Plowing**

Snow will be plowed in a manner so as to minimize any traffic obstructions. The center of the roadway will be plowed first in most operations, and snow will be plowed to the side of the road. Crews will do their best to avoid leaving snow in front of driveways, but due to the nature of plowing operations, there will almost always be some snow left in front of driveways.

In extreme circumstances, crews may be directed to plow snow to the center of a road or cul-de-sac. Plowing snow to the center of the road is not typically desirable because it can create hazards for vehicles or pedestrians, and can contribute to dangerous situations as

the snow melts and runs across the lanes of travel, often re-freezing and making the roads even slipperier.

#### 4. Priorities and Routes

Once crews are dispatched, each operator will follow designated routes and clear roads based on predetermined priorities. Priority routes will be predetermined based on efficient routes of travel, traffic volume, school bus routes, and the need for emergency services. Routes will be designated Primary (Priority 1), Secondary (Priority 2), and Residential (Priority 3). Some residential roads that are narrow, or dead end cul-de-sacs may not be able to be plowed at all. The City **will not** plow private roads or driveways under any circumstance. Crews will focus on Priority 1 routes to ensure they are clear before moving on to Priority 2 routes. Only after all Priority 1 and 2 routes are cleared, and widened if needed, will crews move on to Priority 3 routes. If the snow keeps falling, it may be several days before crews are able to get to Priority 3 routes.

#### 5. Work Schedule

Whenever possible crews will conduct snow plowing and sanding or salting operations during their regular scheduled work hours. However, the reality is that weather does not often align itself with the regular work week. Thus, when necessary, the Public Works Director or designee will assign staff to work outside their normal hours. If crews will be unable to keep up with priority 1 and priority 2 routes, or forecasts indicate more snowy or icy conditions are coming, crews may be split into two shifts. Typically this would involve two ten (10) or twelve (12) hour shifts to cover most of, if not all of each 24 hour day. Crews will remain on this schedule until conditions have improved and they can safely go back to regular work hours. Whenever two shifts are needed the Public Works Director or designee will do his/her best to schedule shift changes outside of the busiest traffic times of the day (i.e. the start and end of work/school day).

The safety of city crews is the very important. Therefore, factors such as severe cold, significant winds, and limited visibility may require snow and ice control operations be placed on hold until it is safe to resume operations.

#### 6. Callouts

Staff may receive after hours callouts for snow or ice control. If an employee is called out, he/she should respond to assess the situation. Upon arriving on site, staff may determine that additional help is needed and may call in another operator if needed. Staff may also determine that it would be best to postpone action until early morning before traffic volumes typically increase. If an operator is unsure what to do, he/she should consult with the Operations Manager or Public Works Director or designee.

## 7. Standards and Expectations

- a. City crews pay attention to weather and proactively apply treatment before the end the normal workday when possible.
- b. Operators will initially clear a single lane in each direction to restore the flow of traffic. Once all priority 1 and 2 routes are opened, operators will return to priority roads and widen travel lanes as appropriate. Only after priority 1 and 2 routes are cleared and widened will operators move on to priority 3 routes.
- c. Operators will not clear private roads or driveways.
- d. Operators will not shovel sidewalks. Snow removal on all sidewalks within the City of College Place is the responsibility of the adjacent property owner or resident.
- e. All operators will provide updates throughout their shifts to keep their supervisor informed about road conditions.

## 8. City Facilities

Whenever possible, staff will be assigned to clear snow or ice at various City facilities. Facilities that are necessary for emergency operations or that are needed for City business including, the Fire station, Police station, City Hall, or the Wastewater Treatment Plant may be prioritized for snow and ice removal.

## 9. Snow Removal

Under rare circumstances, the Public Works Director or designee may decide that snow needs to be physically removed from City streets. If necessary, snow may be hauled to a safe location where it can be stockpiled and eventually allowed to melt without causing further issues. This is not a desirable situation as the cost of equipment to relocate snow can be extremely expensive and stockpiling snow can sometimes cause environmental problems.

## 10. Driveway Clearing.

Normal snow plowing operations often cause snow to be left in front of driveways. The City attempts to minimize snow left in front of driveways. Crews try to keep driveway aprons clear, but are not responsible for driveway clearing. It is the responsibility of residents to clear their driveway and apron.

Date of Policy: December 14, 2021