

Greenfield's Storm Strategy

The Town of Greenfield Dept of Public Works maintains over 120 miles of roadway. In an effort to make the snow season as safe as possible, we offer the following tips and information. Please remember that each storm is different so our strategy is adjusted according to temperature, predicted snow fall, the timing of the storm and the time of year in order to achieve the best results. For example, a different approach would be taken for a storm in mid February when the days are longer and the sun higher in the sky than in early December. The Highway Division supervisor's vehicle is equipped with pavement sensors to determine the temperature of the pavement, as well as air temperature readings. This information, in conjunction with weather forecasts, is used to determine the best and most cost effective means to combat a storm. While we are snuggled under the covers at 4 am he is often riding the streets and bridges to determine if the drizzle outside is water or ice on the pavement.

The DPW staff is well trained and dedicated to plowing around the clock if necessary to keep the roadways open and passable. While public safety is our foremost concern, we are ever mindful of the costs and environmental impacts associated with combating Mother Nature!

Please be advised that the following roadways are maintained by Mass Highway, not the Greenfield DPW:

- Mohawk Trail (30 ft east of Solon St), the rotary and to the town line.
- Route 91
- Rt 2 bypass (Rt 91 east to the Fall River Bridge)
- Bernardston Rd (Silver St north to the town line)
- French King Hwy (Canada Hill to Gill)

General:

Residents should not be concerned if they do not see their roadway plowed during the early part of a snowstorm. Our drivers follow predetermined written routes which call for the most heavily traveled roads, hills and critical roadways such as those that provide access to the hospital to be treated and plowed first. Please be patient, all town owned roads will be eventually plowed.

Before the storm begins:

Starting in the 08/09 winter the DPW adopted a practice of operation more in line with Mass Highway and many other cities where the roadways are treated with deicing chemicals before a storm begins. This is referred to as pretreatment. There are two primary advantages to this approach. The chemicals are crushed into the pavement and create a barrier so that the snow and ice cannot bond to the road. Thus, when the roads are plowed they clear much more quickly. Also, this method is a money saver since often pretreatment can be done during routine working hours rather than on overtime. Also, for most storms, pretreatment negates the need to sand and salt after a storm is done.

When the storm begins:

When snow starts, one or two plow/sanders are called in to keep the hills and main intersections clear. Because of Greenfield's topography we have a number of intersections at the top of hills which means people have to come to a dead stop on these hills many of which, like Bank Row, have a steep grade. When the snow accumulates to 2-4 inches the full plow crew starts plowing their predetermined assigned routes.

During the storm:

The main objective is to keep all roads passable during the storm. Typically, in storms each route is done twice; the first time to open up the streets and the second time to push back, thoroughly clean and “dress up” the streets and intersections. Unfortunately it is impossible to keep the roads free of snow without filling in driveways! You may want to wait until the end of a storm to clear the end of your driveway and always deposit the snow you clear from the end of the driveway to the downstream side of your driveway in order to minimize the redeposit of snow into the cleared opening when the plow makes its next pass.

Plowing operations take approximately 7 hours. Please do not shovel, plow or blow snow or ice into the roadway. It is not only illegal, but can be a serious traffic hazard. If you hire a private contractor to do your plowing please make sure to remind him that you will be held responsible for his actions if he places snow in the roadway.

Parking lots are plowed after midnight. It is impossible to clear parking lots during the day when there are cars parked in the lots; cars would be blocked into their parking spaces. Also, after every storm Main St and other downtown streets are replowed in order to clear them better once there is no traffic or cars in parking spaces.

The Town of Greenfield only clears snow from sidewalks in front of town owned property. Residents and business owners are responsible for clearing snow from their sidewalks. Similarly, residents are responsible for clearing snow from hydrants on their property. Relevant town ordinances are below:

159-16 Responsibilities of owners (sidewalks)

The owner any real estate abutting any Town way where there is a sidewalk, shall within twenty-four (24) hours after the ceasing to fall or form or the accumulation from any other cause of nay snow, ice or sleet upon said sidewalk, cause the same to be removed there from, and if the same cannot be wholly removed shall sprinkle thereon sand or other substance so the such sidewalks shall be safe for travel.

159-17 Violation and penalties.

Whoever violates any provision of the bylaw shall be punished by a fine not exceeding ten dollars (\$10) for the first offense, twenty-five dollars (\$25) for the second offense and for the third and subsequent offenses, one hundred dollars (\$100) for each separate offense in any one (1) calendar year.

159-25 Removal of snow and ice around fire hydrants.

The owner or persons occupying any real estate abutting upon any town or public way where there is a fire hydrant, shall within twenty-four (24) hours after the ceasing to fall or form, or the accumulation from any other cause, of any snow or ice surrounding said fire hydrant, cause the same to be removed to a width of two (2) feet around said fire hydrant except that there shall be kept clear a direct path at least two (2) feet wide to the open Town or public way for access by the Fire Department.

The Police Dept is the authority that issues citations for failure to remove snow from sidewalks. Because of manpower constraints the Police Dept does not actively patrol sidewalks to determine if they are cleared, but will respond to complaints and obvious safety problems.

After the storm:

If colder weather is forecast for the days following a storm, streets must be scraped of slush to prevent icing. Streets are widened so that the drainage structures on the edges of the roadway are exposed so they can take water when melting occurs. As time allows, snow is removed from intersections where sight distance is a concern. After a very large or multiple storms it often becomes necessary to remove snow from the downtown streets and some very narrow side streets. This work is done after midnight when no cars are on the street. It is an expensive operation (\$3000 - \$4000 per night) so it is not done without careful consideration. For example, if there is heavy snowfall in early December, snow removal would be done to make downtown shopping easier for residents. If a large storm were to happen in mid March we probably would not remove the snow simply because it would be melting soon.

Parking:

The DPW would also like to remind citizens that annually, on December 1st the Town's winter parking ban goes into effect and continues through April 1st. Generally the ban prohibits parking on the south and east side of any street. Parking is allowed on both sides of Main St, Federal St, Bank Row and all metered spots for all hours except between 1:00 AM to 6:00 AM. Between 1:00 AM and 6:00 AM no on street parking is allowed anywhere in town. All parking lots can be used during the day and evening hours, but cars must be out of these lots between 1:00 AM and 6:00 AM. There are three lots that have designated overnight parking areas. The West Main Street Lot (behind Green Fields Market) the Hope Street Lot (Corner of Prospect St) and Chapman/Davis Street Lot have designated areas for overnight parking, but cars must be moved out of these areas for snow plowing between 8:00 am and 10:00 am.

Vehicles that are illegally parked will be ticketed and towed at the owner's expense if they interfere with snow removal operations.

Rubbish and Recycling Cancellation:

Because of the confusion it creates we try not to cancel rubbish and recycling collection. However, because of manpower constraints we may need the collectors to perform plowing and other snow related work. If collection is to be cancelled it will be announced on WHAI, WRSI, GCTV, Channel 22 WWLP and Channel 40 WGGB. It will also be placed on the website. Typically, if cancellation is done, the material will be collected the following day.

Other Winter Tips:

- **Placement of trash bags and recycling:** Because our drivers make an average 500 stops per day, they cannot be climbing snow banks and retrieving material from behind snow banks. Place the material in a cleared area such as the driveway apron or shoveled path from the road. Alternately, you can use a shovel and create a shelf on the roadside of the snow bank to place the material. If snow is predicted overnight, do not put your material out until 7 am to prevent it from being covered with snow by the plows.
- **Roadways must be clear of portable basketball posts and nets and other such items.** The regulation prohibit placement of these items in the right-of-way.
- **Placing reflective tape or markers** near mailboxes, fences, road edges etc will make the plow driver's job much easier and lessen the probability of damage to your property.

- **Salt and sand** is available to residents (no contractors) at the Town Yard 209 Wells St from 7am – 3 pm M-F. The public sand pile is just to the right after entry through the main gate.
- **Frozen pipes.** Each year we get calls from residents who have frozen pipes. It is not the Town's responsibility to thaw frozen pipes. In most cases the problem was due to the homeowner forgetting to close and secure a basement window or other opening. Check your basement and walk the perimeter of your home to make sure everything is secure and tight for the winter. Fill any opening with insulation; nail basement windows closed so the wind does not open them. Drain and valve off outside sillcocks; disconnect hoses.

Questions: Please contact the DPW at 413-772-1528 or DPW@greenfield-ma.gov

The DPW staff and I thank you for your cooperation in helping keeping our roadways safe and clear. Please always remember to be sure your vehicle is equipped with proper tires, do not be on the roads in a storm if it can be avoided, drive carefully and always fasten your seat belts.

Sandra Shields, Director