

Administrative Manual Section VII

D. GUIDELINES FOR SNOW AND ICE CONTROL

1. Introduction

The City of Falcon Heights believes that it is in the best interest of the public for the city to assume basic responsibility for control of snow and ice on city streets. Reasonable ice and snow control is necessary for routine travel and emergency services. The city will provide this in a safe and cost effective manner, keeping in mind safety, budget, personnel and environmental concerns. City crews remove snow on local streets, streets designated by contract within the City of Lauderdale, some public pathways, designated city parking lots at City Hall, Community Park and Curtiss Field, and ice rinks.

2. Commencement of Operations

The city's Public Works Director will decide when to begin snow or ice control operations on city streets. The criteria for that decision are:

- a. Accumulation of 2 inches or more, with continual snowfall, warrants commencement of plowing operations;
- b. Drifting of snow may warrant partial or full operations depending on conditions;
- c. Icing of pavements may warrant partial or full sanding operation depending on conditions;
- d. Time of snowfall in relationship to anticipated level of use of streets.

Snow and ice control operations are expensive due to personnel and equipment costs. Consequently, street snowplowing operations will not generally be conducted for snowfalls of less than 2 inches.

3. Procedures

Snow will be plowed in a manner so as to minimize any traffic obstructions. The snow shall be pushed from left to right. The discharge shall go onto the boulevard area of the right-of-way without regard for driveways or sidewalks.

It is the city's goal to have the entire street system cleared after a "typical" snowfall in approximately 5 hours. Depending on snowfall conditions, duration of the storm, equipment and personnel, cleanup operations can fluctuate.

One of the most frequent and most irritable problems in removal of snow from the public streets is the snow deposited in driveways during plowing operations. Snow being accumulated on the plow blade has no place to go but in the driveway. It is not possible to comply with special requests or conduct special maneuvers in attempt to minimize snow in driveways.

4. Priorities and Schedules

a. Street snowplowing

The city has designated Prior Ave. (off of Larpenteur Ave.) and Garden Ave. (Hamline to Snelling Aves.) as top priorities. This classification is based on need to provide access for emergency vehicle fire and medical services and for access to the elementary school. Clearing of these streets is followed by the following neighborhoods subject to weather conditions, weather forecasts, equipment, and availability of crews.

Typical routes if equipment and crews are available:

East Plow

1. Northome
2. Northeast
3. Snelling West
4. Hollywood Court

West Plow

1. University Grove
2. Falcon Woods
3. Lindig/Tatum
4. Lauderdale

b. City Hall parking lot

Clearing of snow from the city hall parking lot will be the first priority of the work week day for the Parks/Public Works staff. Evening and weekend snow removal will be done at the discretion of the Public Works Director based on scheduled meetings and facility rentals.

c. Public pathways

There are approximately 6 miles of paved public pathways for commuter and recreational pedestrian use. The city will plow all trails and sidewalks that abut city property and parks as conditions permit, as well as the areas indicated on the map in Appendix A. Conditions that challenge the crews ability to clear snow include: 1) recurring snowfalls resulting in snow accumulation; 2) drifting; 3) limited space for snow storage and 4) availability and condition of the equipment. Pathway clearing is conducted by the Parks/Public Works staff between 8:00 am and 4:00 pm. A map of sidewalks and trails in included as Appendix A to these guidelines.

d. Ice Skating Rinks

Ice rinks are maintained for the recreational pleasure of the community. Given the high level of community use of the rinks outside of the traditional workday and workweek, rinks are kept free of snow and open for use during these times. Removal of snow from the ice rinks will be done at the discretion of the Public Works Director. Generally, if a “weekend” snowfall should occur and cease prior to noon Sunday, an attempt will be made to clear the rinks and make them available for the weekend. Generally, if a “weekday” snowfall ceases prior to 4:00 p.m., an attempt will be made to make the rinks available for the evening. Consideration of the following factors will be given in the scheduling of ice rink snow removal: condition of pathways (passable), current weather conditions and forces (favorable for skating).

5. Use of Sand and Salt

The city limits the use of sand and salt because it can have adverse effect on the environment. Application is limited to steep grades, curves and intersections and is not intended to provide for widespread bare pavement during winter conditions. The city is not responsible for damage to grass caused by the sand/salt mixture and therefore will not make repairs or compensate residents for salt damage to turf areas in the right-of-way.

6. Property Damage

Snowplowing and ice control operations can cause property damage even under the best of circumstances and care on the part of the operators. The most common types of damage are to improvements in the right-of-way which extends about 10 to 15 feet beyond the curb. The intent of the right-of-way is to provide room for snow storage, utilities, sidewalks and other city uses. The city will assume no liability for personal property that is stored in the right-of-way. Damage to fences, trees or other structures will be repaired or replaced by the city if they are on private property and if the damage could have been avoided. Turf that is scraped or gouged by plow equipment will be repaired by top dressing and seeding the following spring if the damage could be avoided. Residents are requested to assist by watering the areas that are repaired. The city will assume liability for mailboxes damaged during plowing, if it is determined that the plow made direct contact with a mailbox. If a mailbox is damaged due to indirect contact, including the force of snow, the city assumes no responsibility. Final cleaning adjacent to mailboxes is the responsibility of each property owner.

7. Fire Hydrants

Each of the 150 or so fire hydrants scattered throughout the city are equipped with a marker for the purpose of providing increased visibility during the winter season. In addition, the city will encourage residents to keep hydrants clear of snow. Hydrants at

major intersections and covered by heavy snow from plows will be kept accessible as needed and as feasible with city crews and equipment.

8. Parking Restrictions

Providing quality snow removal on city streets requires the street to be free of vehicles or other obstacles. Vehicles left parked on the street for extended periods of time created significant operational problems for snowplow operators as well as safety problems due to packed snow and ice remaining on the roadway around the vehicle.

Parking on city streets is not allowed after a 2 inch accumulation of snow. Vehicles must remain off the streets for up to 48 hours or until a street have been plowed full-width, whichever comes first. In the instance that streets have been plowed but an additional 2 inches or more of snowfall occurs, vehicles must remain off the street (see City Code Section 46-28). Any vehicle parked in violation of the City Code is subject to a parking citation and is also declared to be a public nuisance. This nuisance may be abated by removing and towing away vehicles under the direction of the City's contracted police agency.

From November 15 to April 1, residents may park one passenger vehicle on the unsurfaced portion of their front yard. This provision only applies to properties with a single-width driveway. The vehicle must be parked parallel to the driveway (see City Code Section 113-310).

9. Responsibility of Property Owners

Residents and/or their contracted snow removal company must keep all snow on the private property. It is a public nuisance to shovel or plow snow into or across the streets or alleys.

Clearing of alleyways is the responsibility of property owners adjacent to the alley. The alley must be cleared within 24 hours after snowfall has ended. Residents are encouraged to manage the alley with one contractor so as to have a uniform plowing.

Some sidewalks in the city must be cleared by the adjacent property owners (see Appendix A). Public sidewalks must be cleared of snow and ice within 24 hours after a storm has ended. Failure to do so is a public nuisance. City staff will monitor the sidewalks and will leave door hangers to remind residents of the sidewalk snow removal regulations. Sidewalks that are not cleared in the appropriate timeframe may be cleared by city staff or a contracted party. The cost of abatement will be billed to the property owner (see City Code Section 22-48). In only the most extreme instances will City staff provide a courtesy plow of sidewalks that are not usually maintained by the City.

If snow removal occurs during a day of trash collection, receptacles awaiting pickup should be set back at least two feet behind the curb line, not in the street.

10. Information and Comments

Comments and complaints will be taken during normal working hours at city hall. Complaints that warrant a short term response will typically be responded to within 24 hours of receiving the complaint, whenever feasible to do so.

Policy amended by City Council on November 15, 2023