

CITY OF EAGLE LAKE SNOW PLOWING POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

The City of Eagle Lake believes that it is in the best interest of the residents for the City to assume basic responsibility for control of snow, freezing rain, sleet, ice or other phenomenon on City streets. Reasonable snow and ice control are 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.

The removal of snow, freezing rain, sleet, ice or other phenomenon from public streets, public parking lots and other areas is an emergency operation that takes precedence over all other work for the Public Works Department except other emergency situations.

2. PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT'S SNOW, FREEZING RAIN, SLEET, ICE OR OTHER PHENOMENON CONTROL GOALS

- A. Monitor weather and road conditions 24 hours per day.
- B. Maintain all streets in a safe driving condition.
- C. Perform snow removal and ice control in a timely manner.
- D. Perform all maintenance tasks equally and in the best interest of all Eagle Lake taxpayers.

3. WEATHER CONDITIONS

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

4. GUIDELINES FOR SNOW AND ICE REMOVAL

The Public Works Department will determine when a snow emergency is to be declared and when to begin snow and ice control operations. The following are criteria for such a decision:

- A. When snow accumulates on flat areas to a depth of three (3) inches or more;
- B. When drifting snow causes problems for travel;
- C. When icy conditions seriously affect travel;

- D. When snowfall during heavy use of streets makes travel difficult;
- E. When snow or ice conditions during off-peak travel hours would make emergency vehicles travel difficult;

Snow and ice control operations are expensive and involve the use of limited personnel and equipment. Consequently, snow plowing will not generally be conducted for snowfalls of less than one (1) inch.

5. PRIORITIES AND SCHEDULE IN WHICH STREETS WILL BE PLOWED

Priorities A limited amount of resources and the need to provide the greatest safety and benefit to the traveling public, in the most efficient manner, necessitate that priority be given to certain streets above others. Streets with higher traffic volume have a higher priority for snow removal service. Streets, with lower traffic volume (i.e. subdivisions and cul-de-sacs) have the lowest priority.

City streets have been divided into four priority categories as follows:

Priority One: These are arterial and major collector streets (Examples: 598th Avenue, Le Sueur Avenue, Plainview Street) and city facilities which assist in emergency response.

Priority Two: These are generally subdivision collector streets. (Connie Lane, Blace Avenue, etc.)

Priority Three: All other residential through streets, (excluding cul-de-sacs.)

Priority Four: Cul-de-sacs and other dead-end streets. The City incurs proportionally more time and costs clearing snow from cul-de-sacs than on typical “uninterrupted” stretches of streets. Because of the high cost-to-benefit ratio, and lower traffic volume, cul-de-sacs and dead-end streets have the lowest priority, and will be the last areas addressed. If these streets become snow packed, they will not be cleared to pavement. Residents need to be prepared for winter driving conditions. Streets in subdivisions will be slick and travelers will need to exercise caution and travel at a lower speed.

6. MANNER OF 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. The snow will then be pushed from left to right but in certain situations from right to left. The discharge will go onto the boulevard area of the street. In times of extreme snowfall, streets will not always be immediately or completely cleared of snow. The City does not assure a completely bare roadway. Users of City roadways are reminded to exercise caution and to drive with care.

Parked Cars: It is dangerous and difficult to plow streets clogged with parked vehicles. Some streets, especially cul-de-sacs may not be plowed, if plows cannot

safely drive down them. The most helpful thing residents can do to facilitate snow removal is to get their cars off the street, and encourage others to do the same.

7. SNOW REMOVAL

The Public Works Department will determine when snow will be removed by truck from an area. Such snow removal will occur in areas where there is not 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 snow plowing operations have been completed. Snow removal operations may also be delayed depending on weather conditions, personnel and budget availability. The snow will be hauled to a snow storage area. The snow area will be located to minimize environmental problems.

8. EMERGENCY PARKING REGULATIONS

A. Definitions

For the purpose of this section, the term “Emergency” shall mean any condition upon any public street, including the presence of snow, freezing rain, sleet, ice or other phenomenon, which condition creates or is likely to create any hazardous road condition or impedes or is likely to impede the free movement of traffic, when such conditions have been declared by the Public Works Department.

B. Declaration

Upon the existence of an emergency as defined herein, the City shall notify the media and request that the media cooperate with the City in giving notice of such emergency to the community. This information will also be posted on the City website and when possible emailed to residents that have requested such notifications. The emergency regulations set forth below shall become effective one (1) hour after such notice has been given by the City to such news media. If an emergency is declared the day before for a set time the next day, the emergency will become effective as stated in the notification.

C. Unlawful Acts

During an emergency, it is unlawful for any person, as a driver or operator of a vehicle or trailer, or as the registered owner of such vehicle or trailer, to park, stop or leave standing, or cause, allow or permit to be parked, stopped or left standing, whether knowingly or unknowingly, any such vehicle upon any City street until the snow emergency has been lifted.

D. Towing

Upon the existence of an emergency as defined in Section 3, Subdivision A, the City may tow vehicles in violation of this policy as authorized in Minnesota State Statute 169.041

E. Use of Salt and Sand

The City budget does not allow for salting priority three (residential) nor priority four (cul-de-sacs). Once operations have begun, salting will continue until the selected streets have traction restored. Due to limited salt storage and delivery capacities, when more snow is predicted, salting may be halted to conserve salt.

9. SIDEWALKS

The City will maintain some of the sidewalks in the City. Since there are a limited number of personnel available, the City will maintain these sidewalks after the streets and parking lots have been plowed.

10. ADDITIONAL SNOW REMOVAL INFORMATION

Continuation and Completion. During major storms, traffic on low-priority streets usually causes the snow to become packed or icy, before it can be plowed. When snow has become compacted on low-priority streets and plowing is ineffective, the operations will discontinue until regular working hours.

Street Closures. If storm conditions warrant, the Police Department, Fire Department or Public Works Department may close streets for safety reasons. When streets are closed, vehicles are not to go around barricades. This could cause harm to people or property. We are aware this may cause an inconvenience to the traveling public. However, due to storms which are of such a magnitude that they are beyond the capabilities of our resources, such closures may be required.

Solid Waste Collection. The solid waste collection contractor will decide whether it is safe for their trucks to pick up during or immediately following a storm. If the contractor delays pick up, the service will usually be conducted the following day.

Snow Removal. Blowing, throwing or pushing snow from driveways and walks into the street creates additional work for snowplow operators, and may create a traffic hazard. Some business and residents have pushed large piles of snow onto the street, hoping it would melt quickly. The snow pile is a hazard itself, but the ice created when the melting snow refreezes can create an even more dangerous situation. Throw snow onto landscaped areas in the yard or parking lot.

- A. Minnesota State Statute 160.27 states that it is unlawful to plow snow from driveways onto or across public right-of-ways. Piles of snow left on or near the road can freeze into a solid mass creating a hazardous situation for vehicles and snowplows. Accidents and damages caused by snow piles placed in the roadway may result in liability to the property owner. Piles of snow also increase chances of drifting snow onto the roadway.
- B. City equipment will not be used to remove stuck vehicles from ditches, snow banks or any other impediment.

Cul-de-sacs. It takes considerably longer to clear snow from cul-de-sacs than other “uninterrupted” stretches of City streets. Because of the low traffic volume and high cost-to-benefit ratio, cul-de-sacs and dead-end streets have the lowest priority. Cul-de-sacs will be cleared, but it will likely be several days after a storm ends.

In an effort to become more efficient, crews will, when feasible, use the following standard in plowing snow in cul-de-sacs:

1. One full pass will be made around the perimeter of the cul-de-sac with a snowplow, pushing the snow to the outside of the cul-de-sac.
2. As time allows after a heavy snow, the snow will be plowed out of the center of the cul-de-sac and dispersed to the sides of the street.

Sidewalks. Eagle Lake Property owners are responsible for keeping all sidewalks along their property clear of snow and ice. The City requires residents to clear their sidewalks within 24 hours after a snowstorm. City crews are responsible for clearing sidewalks at City’s facilities. Snow removed from sidewalks and driveways should be placed in the boulevard area or on private property and **NOT** in the public roads.

Driveways. Snow moved by a snowplow blade has no place to go but in the road right-of-way, which includes driveways. Many times snowplowing forms snow drifts across driveway approaches, which may create hardships for some residents. However, the City possesses neither the personnel nor equipment to clear driveway approaches within the City. Snow removal of the driveway approaches is the resident's responsibility.

Mail Delivery. In most cases, damage occurs during the plowing process because aged posts or improperly mounted boxes are unable to withstand the rigors of the winter plowing season. The City will replace the mailbox and/or post if it is actually struck and damaged by a snowplow. Mailboxes should be installed to withstand heavy or wet snow coming off the end of the plow. The final cleaning adjacent to mailboxes is the responsibility of the property owner. If damage occurs due to snow discharge or snow storage, the City will not be responsible for repairs.

Trails. Some paved sections of the City's trail system will be cleared of snow by City crews as time allows. Unpaved areas are left unplowed for various forms of winter recreation. The trails are the last priority and will be cleared after all other roads in the City have been addressed.

Fire Hydrants. There are many fire hydrants located throughout Eagle Lake. During this time of year, we can expect that snow and snow removal activities may cause snow to be piled near fire hydrants and obstruct their access. It is important for residents living and businesses operating near fire hydrants to keep this in mind and take action during their personal snow removal activities. It is recommended that a

clear space of 3 feet be maintained around the circumference of fire hydrants to permit easy access in emergencies.

What can I do if I can't shovel snow from my sidewalk or drive approach?

Whenever possible, when a resident is physically unable to perform snow removal arrangements should be made with a relative, friend or neighbor, for help.

Safety tips

- When trucks are plowing snow and spreading salt. Stay back from the vehicle a minimum of 100 feet to avoid problems.
- Plow trucks often have to back up. There are blind spots in the mirrors. For your safety, do not pull up directly behind them. They may not be able to see you.
- When cleaning driveways or parking lots, do not put snow in the street. This can cause problems for other motorists.
- Plow trucks generally push snow to the passenger side of the truck (right side when looking at it from the rear). Never attempt to pass a truck on the right since there can be much more snow on that side of the vehicle.

Streets Plowed by Other Agencies County Highways are plowed by Blue Earth County. These streets include: LeRay Avenue, County State Aid Road 56, Parkway Avenue and Agency Street.

11. RIGHT-OF-WAY RECOMMENDATIONS

Mailboxes, lights, etc. should be constructed sturdy enough to withstand snow rolling off the plow or wing. Therefore, damage resulting from snow is the responsibility of the resident. The City may accept responsibility for damage if a mailbox is physically struck by a plow and if the mailbox post is considered to be of proper construction, regulation height, proper distance from the curb line and in good repair.

Improvements in the right-of-way (boulevards) including fences, mailboxes, planter boxes, light fixtures, decorative landscaping and irrigation systems have been placed on the City's property in most instances without notification or permission from the City. Mailboxes and similar objects are quite often obvious and easy to avoid. Low structures, decorative landscaping and irrigation systems are impossible to be aware of after a storm. Therefore, the City cannot accept responsibility for the damage.

Property Damage Claims. Snowplowing and ice control operations can result in property damage, particularly during blizzard conditions or during nighttime snowplowing. Incidents involving contact between City equipment and private property typically occur within the public street right-of-way, which commonly extends beyond the adjoining sidewalk. The intent of the right-of-way is to provide for snow storage, utilities, sidewalks, and other City uses. Homeowners are permitted to place some improvements, such as mailboxes, within the right-of-way. In the event of damage to private property during snow removal efforts, the property owner may file a claim with the City of Eagle Lake. The damage will then be investigated to

determine if any damage is the City's responsibility. The weight of accumulating snow may cause tree limbs to break, or other damage to structures. Such damage is the responsibility of the resident and his/her insurance company.

12. CITY COUNCIL RIGHT TO DEVIATE FROM POLICY

While this Snow Plowing Policy is intended to address many of the issues involving snow removal, the City Council reserves the right to modify and or delete responsibilities or modify order of priorities as it may deem necessary for the sake of public health, safety and welfare.