

City of Woonsocket, RI

Department of Public Works



Snow & Ice Control Policy

I. Purpose

The purpose of this Snow and Ice Control Policy is to establish and maintain uniform procedures concerning snow and ice operations for the City of Woonsocket. The City shall provide such control in a safe and cost effective manner while keeping safety, budget, personnel, and environmental concerns in mind. The City shall use its employees, equipment, and / or private contractors to provide this service. It is in the City's best interest to have a Snow and Ice Control Policy, but because of variable weather conditions, the policy must remain flexible.

II. Policy

Operations will continue until all City streets are passable. However, the City does not guarantee bare, dry pavement conditions after each snowfall or that streets will be totally free of ice and snow or driving hazards common to Rhode Island winter weather. It is the intention of the City to provide practical, safe access along City streets during winter storms. The City plows over 110 miles of roadway and all municipal parking lots. The City's roadways are divided into 19 separate snow plow routes. We also store 6,000 gallons of brine, liquid anti-icing solution, and 3,000 gallons of Magnesium Chloride. These materials are used in conjunction with road salt for more effective and efficient anti-icing treatment.

III. Procedures

- A. The Public Works Director or designee shall be responsible for enforcing and implementing this policy and will decide when to begin snow and ice control operations. The criteria for that decision shall be based upon:
 1. Snow accumulation of at least two inches or more.
 2. Drifting of snow that impairs travel.
 3. Icy conditions which seriously hinders travel.
 4. Time of snowfall in relationship to heavy traffic use of streets.
 5. Time of snowfall in relationship to its melting off the streets.
- B. Snow and ice control operations shall be conducted only when weather conditions do not endanger the safety of City employees and equipment. Factors that may delay snow and ice control operations include, but are not limited to, severe cold temperature, significant wind speed, limited visibility, and rapid accumulation of snow and/ or ice.
- C. Sand, salt, and other chemicals may be used prior to a storm, where hazardous icy or slippery conditions exist, or after a storm. Sand, salt, or other chemicals may be placed at intersections, hills, crosswalks, curves, and required vehicle stop areas as necessary for driving safety. This provides for traction, but is not intended to provide bare pavement during winter driving conditions.

IV. During The Storm

When approximately two inches of snow has accumulated and more is expected, the Department transitions from anti-icing into snow plowing operations. Our first priority is to open the main arterial roadways. These roadways are the key to maintaining a steady flow of traffic and access for emergency vehicles. The plowing then continues to the remaining streets on the plow routes to "open up" each one in sequence. If the storm continues in intensity, the snow removal equipment remains in this pattern until the storm abates. As the storm abates, equipment begins to "widen out" all roads by pushing the accumulated snow back to the curb line. Concurrently, equipment begins clearing roadway intersections to improve sight lines and visibility.

Crews continue to monitor all roads for icy spots and areas where winds redeposit the snow in traffic lanes. Usually an application of sand and salt is applied to all intersections, hills, and curves to help improve traction. Please understand that the City cannot shovel ridges or windrows from your driveway that were left by the snowplow, nor can City crews plow private property.

V. Level of Service

It is our policy to conduct snow removal and/or ice control operations throughout snow storms to keep streets open for vehicles. Snow removal operations will begin upon accumulation of two inches of snowfall. The Director may, at his or her discretion based upon weather information reports, elect to not remove snow until greater or lesser accumulations. During nights and weekends, the Woonsocket Police Department shall notify the Director that road conditions warrant mobilization of snow removal or ice control operations. Pre-treatment and ice control may be addressed prior to the actual storm beginning, during the storm as seen effective and after the storm. It should be noted that salt has a much slower effect on melting snow and ice at temperatures below 25 degrees, and may not be applied until it is warmer.

VI. Parking Ban

- Parking Ordinance: <https://www.woonsocketri.org/press-releases/news/winter-parking-ordinance-and-parking-ban-permit-program-reminder>

The Woonsocket Police Department, after consulting with the Director of Public Works, will usually institute a parking ban on City streets whenever plow-able snow is forecast. Bans are announced by the local media - TV and radio and the City's web site but should be considered to be in effect during most snowstorms. Your vehicle may be towed (at your expense) if it is parked in violation of the ban. If your car is off the road, the plows can clear the roads more efficiently and quickly. The parking ban stays in effect until the plowing is complete, or until further notice.

VII. Throwing (debris) Snow on Roads and Sidewalks

[State Law Title 31-22-9](#) and [City Code of Ordinance Chapter 16, Section 16-20](#) – This means that when you shovel or plow out your driveway or sidewalk; No snow is to be plowed, shoveled, blown, or placed onto a City street, or City sidewalk or across the roadways to the opposite side, before or after any street, sidewalk or public highway has been snowplowed by city authorities, it should be immediately cleaned up and removed so as to eliminate any hazard or danger to the public (or it having to be re-plowed). If you hire a contractor to plow/shovel your driveway, please advise them of this regulation - they may be unaware of this law. When the plow trucks go by, they generate **windrows** - the pesky ridge of snow at the bottom of your driveways. We do not do this intentionally - it is a byproduct of plowing, and we ask that if you shovel it before the end of the storm, that you cast it to the right of your driveway (facing the street) into your yard to minimize another windrow when the plow returns, helping to keep the road and your driveway

clear. It is the resident's responsibility to clear the passage.

VIII. Clearing of Sidewalks

Many People, including children, the elderly and those using wheelchairs, and strollers, depend on sidewalks all year long.

The owner or tenant or property care taker shall clear any abutting sidewalk to the property within the guidelines of the City of Woonsocket, Code of Ordinance Chapter 16, Sections 16-19 and 16-21. (<http://clerkshq.com/Content/Woonsocket-ri/books/code/woonc16.htm>)

❖ Direct Link: [Section 16-19](#) & Direct Link: [Section 16-21](#)

IX. Damage to Property

The City of Woonsocket is not held responsible for damage to private property that is located within the Public right of way. Snow and ice operations can cause property damage even under the best circumstances and care on the part of the operators.

The intent of the right of way is to provide room for snow storage, utilities, trees, sidewalks, and other City uses. The right of way can be up to 50 feet wide, and is often confused by property owners as their own property. In most cases, the right of way extends 7 to 9 feet on either side of the paved or gravel road. Home-owners often cultivate extensions of their lawns, place mailboxes, erect fences or stone walls in these areas which can be obstructive to good maintenance being conducted on the roadway.

In the event of personal property damage, the City of Woonsocket will only be responsible to repair or replace damaged property having been in actual contact with the snow removal equipment that is on private property and not within the public right of way.

X. Landscaping

Only those items which are installed properly and allowed by City Ordinance to be adjacent to streets and damaged by actual contact with City equipment will be considered for repair or replacement at City expense. Damage to trees, fences, shrubbery, sprinkler heads, and other landscaping in the City's right of way will not be considered for compensation. Lawns that are scraped or gouged by City snow and ice operations will be repaired by top dressing and seeded in the following spring.

XI. Trash/Recycling Bins

Trash and Recycle: <https://www.woonsocketri.org/solid-waste-department>

Waste Management, the City's contracted trash and recycling company, decides if and when to pull the trucks from the road during storms. Stay tuned to media outlets or the City's website for any cancellations. Please keep all carts curbside, not in the road where they would create an obstacle and safety hazard for the plows and other vehicles. Please take in any empty carts as soon as possible so the wind does not blow them around.

XII. Resident Responsibility

- A. Stay informed by using the City local emergency alert known as "CodeRED". Go to the City website <https://www.woonsocketri.org/fire-department> to sign up for Free.

- B. Be alert and drive with caution, remember winter storms can create slick road conditions, maintain safe distances between vehicles and decrease your driving speed and allow additional time to stop.
- C. Expect delays, allow extra driving time and please do not pass the plow trucks. Stay back 50' from the plow truck and do not crowd in behind them, the vehicle may reverse direction at intersections.
- D. Park vehicles off the roadway, a parking ban will be in effect and the Police will tow vehicles that interfere with snow removal operations.
- E. Teach children not to approach a plow truck and not to throw objects at the plow truck or into the roadway and do not allow them to play, sled or build snow forts in the road or within close proximity to the roadway.
- F. Remove all basketball hoops, hockey goals, or other items that should not be in the roadway or the right of way. The City of Woonsocket does not assume responsibility or liability for damage done to items left in the right-of-way.
- G. Trees and other landscape features that are within the right-of-way and close to the edge of the roadway owned by the property owner are not the responsibility of the City if damage is done. The City has the right to remove and trim trees, branches and shrubs that interfere with and damage our equipment

XIII. Storm Drains/Catch Basins

Melting snow can create a flooding problem if leaves and debris cover the opening. If you are aware of a problem area, please contact the Highway Division with the location (as accurate as possible) and we will respond as quickly as possible to remedy the situation. It is encouraged, that any resident of the City that resides in house with a storm drain in the front of the building, help maintain access to the storm drain.

XIV. Schools

The Woonsocket School Department is responsible for snow and ice control on the school driveways and parking lots.

XV. Fire Hydrants

The Fire Department locates and shovels fire hydrants to maintain access in case of an emergency. It is encouraged, that any resident of the City that resides in house with a fire hydrant in the front of the building, help maintain access to the hydrant.

Please see: [City of Woonsocket, Code of Ordinances, Chapter 16, Section 16-20](#)

XVI. Roads and Sidewalks NOT maintained by the City

The City of Woonsocket does not maintain a certain number of roadways, sidewalks and other areas as part of its winter maintenance activities. The areas not maintained by the City include:

- Private roads, driveways and sidewalks on private property

- Roadways not accepted by the City
- Roads, sidewalks and other areas maintained or within the jurisdiction of the State of Rhode Island.
 - Please contact Rhode Island DOT if these streets need attention
 - a) <http://www.dot.ri.gov/about/help.php>
- A. Roads owned & maintained by the State of Rhode Island.
 1. Social Street – MA / RI Line to North Main St
 2. Park Avenue – Hamlet Ave to Smithfield Rd
 3. Mendon Road – MA / RI Line to Cumberland Hill Rd
 4. Manville Road – Hamlet Ave to City Limit
 5. Cumberland Hill Road – Cumberland St to Route 99
 6. Route 99

XVII. The Nature of Each Storm

Each storm varies with temperature, wind, rate of snowfall, time of day, duration of storm, workday or weekend, and can present challenges. The characteristics of each storm even vary within different sections of the City. Light storms, heavy storms, blizzards, drifting snow, ice buildup on tree limbs and power lines are also a factor in how we “attack” the clean-up operation. Other factors would be equipment availability, possible breakdowns, and time for maintenance, refueling, manpower, and necessary 'rest' breaks.

We appreciate your patience and cooperation, and if you have further questions, please give us a call

Department of Public Works – Contact Numbers
 (Snow Storms Only) Highway Control Tower – (401)-767-8883
 Public Works – (401)-597-0857 & (401)-767-9213
 Highway Division – (401)-767-9286
 Trash & Recycling – (401)-767-8880

Website: <https://www.woonsocketri.org/public-works>

XVIII. Winter Safety Tips

- **MIND THE PLOW**, don't assume snow plow drivers can see you; their field of vision is limited. Stay a minimum of 50 feet (three car lengths) from the snow plow so the driver can see you. Leave plenty of room for stopping.
- Clear all snow and ice from your car (with special attention to windows, lights, and roofs) before driving.
- Prepare your vehicle for winter driving. Check antifreeze, battery, tires and wiper blades, pack blankets, and prepare a first aid kit.
- Avoid strain while shoveling and clearing snow.
- Replace batteries in carbon monoxide and fire detectors each spring and fall.
- Use caution when operating emergency generators; ensure they are operated in well ventilated areas. Do not run vehicles or generators within attached garages.

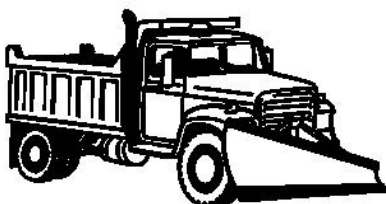
For additional tips please browse the following websites:

<https://www.redcross.org/local/rhode-island/about-us/news-and-events/news/Red-Cross-Has-Safety-Reminders-Ahead-of-Winter-Weather.html>

<https://www.nsc.org/home-safety/tools-resources/seasonal-safety/winter>

https://www.weather.gov/wrn/winter_safety

<http://www.dot.ri.gov/travel/winter.php>



February 18, 2019