



CITY OF AUBURN

CITY OF AUBURN, NEW YORK SNOW REMOVAL POLICY

Introduction

The City of Auburn is responsible for the control of snow and ice on city owned roads. Reasonable snow and ice control is necessary for routine travel and also for the delivery of city emergency services. The City of Auburn will provide such control in a safe and cost effective manner while taking into account safety, budget, personnel and various environmental concerns. The city maintains approximately 315 streets totaling approximately 108 miles of roadway, all of which are kept open during the winter months.

The City of Auburn will strive to maintain safe conditions for drivers experiencing winter driving conditions; however, this does not constitute a bare pavement policy. It should be understood that although this policy sets general guidelines to be followed, each winter storm has unique characteristics that will dictate how a storm is to be addressed. This policy will remain flexible and take into consideration each storm's conditions.

How the Crew and Equipment are Dispatched

The City of Auburn operates three work shifts from December through March in anticipation of severe weather. Due to staffing levels, the only shifts currently not covered during winter months are Saturday's second and third shifts and Sunday's first and second shifts. During these times, we rely heavily on the Auburn Police Department and the Auburn Fire Department to report unsafe road conditions to the Auburn Water Filtration Plant and they in turn will contact the DPW for action.

The shift foreman will determine when the snow and ice removal operations begin. Typically, the criteria for his/her decision is as follows:

- Snow accumulations of approximately 2 to 4 inches or more;
- Drifting snow that causes problems for travel;
- Icy road conditions; and
- Actual time of the snowfall in relationship to street usage.

Snow and ice removal operations will continue until all roads are passable. Widening and clean up operations may continue immediately or on the following shift or day depending on weather conditions. Safety of the plow operators and the general public is the most important factor when dispatching crews. As a result, plowing and removal operations may be suspended at times to allow the city's personnel adequate time to rest.

Snow and ice control operations may also be suspended during times of limited visibility, high winds or severe cold for employee safety and to minimize equipment damage. Any decision to suspend operations will be made by the Superintendent of Public Works or the shift foremen, with input from the Superintendent. The City will provide access for emergency and fire equipment, police and medical services on an as needed basis during these shutdown periods.

Snow Plowing

Snow will be plowed in a manner to minimize traffic or pedestrian obstructions. Typically, the crew starts at the road's centerline and makes a center cut in both directions, pushing the snow towards the curb on each half of the road. The next task is to perform the curb cut in each direction on each half of the road. The smaller, residential roads can usually be completed in four passes (one center cut and one curb cut on each half of the road). This same technique is also used on the larger, multi-lane roads; however, the wider, multi-lane roads are much more difficult to complete and take more plow runs to finish.

Snow Removal

After plowing, snow removal is performed by the City of Auburn. This is routinely done in the downtown and commercial sections of the city during the night shift. However, the frequency of the removal process is directly related to the weather conditions and the snowfall amounts that continue to fall. Snow removal will occur in areas where there is no room at the curb lines for snow storage and in areas where accumulated snow can create a hazardous condition. Snow removal operations will not begin until the snowplowing operations have been completed. Snow removal operations may also be delayed depending on weather conditions, staffing and budget constraints.

Plowing Priorities

As previously mentioned, the City of Auburn maintains approximately 108 miles of roadway. These roads have been classified based on function, traffic volume and importance to the welfare of the community. These roads are further categorized and thirteen specific plow routes have been developed.

Each of the routes has roads with a priority importance factor attached ranging from priority 1 to priority 3. Streets classified as Priority 1 will be plowed first. These are high volume routes that connect major sections of the city and provide access for emergency fire, police and medical services. Priority 2 streets are those that provide access to schools and commercial businesses. Priority 3 streets are low volume residential streets. There is a specific truck that prioritizes the city's seven parking lots as well as the police department and the various fire stations.

Where steep hills or other safety concerns exist, a street may be advanced to a higher priority for immediate plowing and/or ice control. For operating efficiency some lower priority streets may be completed before higher priority streets when equipment is in the area rather than returning later to do the lower priority street.

Weather Conditions

As previously stated, snow and ice removal operations will be conducted only when conditions do not endanger the safety of the staff or equipment, and where the plowing and removal efforts can be effective. Factors that may delay snow and ice removal operations include but are not limited to: severe cold, high winds, limited visibility and rapid accumulations of snow and/or ice.

Use of Salt

The City of Auburn will use salt to minimize ice buildup to address slippery conditions. The salt will be applied after the streets have been plowed. Ideally, each plow truck is equipped with a salt spreader and can distribute the salt as it is plowing. The use of salt will be monitored closely because of its cost and also to limit its effect on the environment. Even after due diligence with regard to plowing and salting, snow and ice may still accumulate.

Sidewalks

The city possesses a sidewalk plow as part of its snow removal equipment. This will be dispatched to plow the snow from the city owned sidewalks: bridges, parks, parking lots, buildings, etc. It will be dispatched as part of the normal snow and ice removal operations to assure that the city sidewalks are kept clear to provide pedestrian access.

The City of Auburn does not clear private sidewalks. This is addressed in Section 44-6 of the Municipal Code of the City of Auburn.

Damage

Only legal properties allowed by city code to be adjacent to streets and damaged by contact with city equipment will be considered for repair or replacement at city expense. Damage to trees, shrubbery or other landscaping will not be considered for repair or replacement.

Driveways

The biggest problem with snow plowed from city streets is that the snow is deposited into private driveways. Our operators make every attempt to minimize the amount of snow put back into driveways. However, due to the inherent design of plow equipment, the amount of snow left at the end of the driveways can be significant. We do not provide private driveway cleaning. Possible exemptions are at the discretion of the superintendent or the on-call foreman for a fire or medical emergency situation.

Mailboxes

We will plow as close as possible to mailboxes so the USPS can deliver to each residence. It shall be the responsibility of the property owner to clear any snow that has built up on their property if this is prohibiting the delivery of mail. Because of their locations, on occasion mailboxes will be hit by our plows. Repair or replacement of these mailboxes will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis. Damage to a mailbox by a city plow does not guarantee repair or replacement at city expense.

Parking

There is mandatory alternate side parking throughout the City of Auburn. This aids in the plowing and removal of snow and ice by guaranteeing us full road access within a twenty-four hour period. If a vehicle is illegally parked, it may be towed at the owner's expense to provide us access necessary to ensure public safety during the winter months.

Complaints

Complaints concerning damage from plowing activities should be directed to the Department of Public Works at 315.253.9554. Please be advised that the phone is staffed between the hours of 7:00am to 3:30pm, Monday through Friday. After these hours, the shift staff may answer the phone when they are not out plowing. Complaints received will be handled on a priority basis and response time may vary for any complaint received.