



Carlton County Transportation Department Snow and Ice Removal Policy

Adopted: June 12, 2018

Revised: July 17, 2018

The Carlton County Transportation Department is responsible for the removal of snow and ice from county roads, as well as some township roads and city streets based on interagency agreements. Snow and ice removal performance can be affected by a variety of factors such as intensity and duration of the storm event, temperature, wind and moisture content of the snow. The department's snow removal priorities reflect a commitment to ensure the safety of the traveling public.

I. Purpose

The following policy has been created to establish expectations and improve citizen awareness of snow and ice removal procedures. Further, the policy has been created to clarify the County's level of service for snow and ice removal. The policy describes the minimum service expected to be provided by the County. The County reserves the right to provide services under this policy that exceed the minimum standards set forth herein.

II. Goal

The general goal of the Transportation Department is to make the county roads navigable within a reasonable amount of time after a snow and/or ice event has occurred. Roadways are prioritized by traffic volume and logical routing.

III. Level of Service

A. General

Removal of snow and ice and placing of sand, salt, chemicals, or other abrasive material on the County roadway system is primarily for the safety of the traveling public. Each storm event has individual characteristics that must be dealt with accordingly. The portion of the roadway improved for travel will have upon it snow and ice in a compacted condition. These conditions may be continuous, or they may be concentrated on hills, in valleys, curves, intersections, and/or locations of particular topographical or traffic features.

B. Removal/Abrasive Placement Capacity

The Transportation Department's existing snow removal equipment will be used to implement this policy. The County does not ensure a completely bare road and will not normally deice entire sections of roadway. The priority is deicing of intersections, hills, and curves.

The level of snow removal and deicing materials placed during the winter season shall be accomplished within budget for this service as contained in the County's Transportation Department budget adopted by the County Board of Commissioners. As such, frequency of material application may be adjusted based upon the availability of material or sufficient resources.

C. Removal Operations

The entire width of the portion of the roadway improved for travel may not be cleared of snow, ice, compacted snow and ice, or frost. Snow cleared from that

part of the roadway improved for travel shall be placed on or in the adjacent shoulder, ditch, or right-of-way. But, during snow removal operations, snow may be temporarily stored on a portion of the traveled way.

Snow can be expected to accumulate adjacent to the traveled portions of the roadway, which may greatly reduce or impair a motorist's sight distance to both the left and the right. The snow removed from intersections may be piled in their corners and may result in snow piles of unequal height. The line of sight, sight distance, or visibility of motorists approaching these intersections may be greatly reduced or impaired.

Property owners shall not push snow from their driveway, or property in general, onto the County right-of-way, including the roadway, shoulders, or any adjacent sidewalk or trail in accordance with Minnesota State Statute § 160.27, subdivision 5. Any violation of this statute is considered a misdemeanor and property owners acting in violation of this policy may be cited. *The County shall not be responsible for snow pushed or otherwise placed on the roadway or shoulders by others.*

D. Motor Vehicle Operations

In general, motorists should adjust their driving in a manner that is appropriate for the existing road conditions. Motorists shall operate their vehicles during these conditions with additional caution and watchfulness, especially with respect to the roadway's surface and the motorist's visibility, which may be reduced or impaired.

Driving up to or at the statutory or posted speed limit may not be advisable, depending on weather conditions. The public is requested **not to crowd the plow**. People who drive during the winter season will encounter snow and ice removal equipment. Flashing lights will generally be the first indication of the presence of snow removal equipment. Citizens are cautioned to reduce speed, pass with care, and maintain a safe distance when encountering snow removal equipment. **Never pass on the right.**

E. Municipal and Township Roads

Snow and ice removal will be performed within the corporate limits of a municipality or within a township's boarders only in accordance with agreements with those municipalities or townships.

IV. **Dispatching of Snow Removal Equipment**

A. General

The decision to mobilize snow removal equipment will be made by the Maintenance Superintendent, or an authorized County representative based upon the following guidelines:

- The Transportation Department will generally not dispatch snow removal equipment until after a snowfall has stopped. During extended periods of snowfall or icy conditions, exceptions may be made.
- The Transportation Department will apply snow control measures when snow accumulation exceeds two (2) inches in depth or seriously impedes traffic.

- Snow accumulations of less than two (2) inches may not be plowed.
- Snow removal equipment will not be sent out in situations that may be hazardous due to restricted visibility.
- Snow removal equipment will not be dispatched at night except for emergency calls, such as assisting fire departments, or ambulance crews. Icing bridges or drifting snow are expected winter travel conditions and are generally not adequate justification to dispatch snow removal crews.

B. Hours of Operation

The Carlton County Transportation Department presently operates with enough personnel to operate one shift daily. In a snow event, the necessary County personnel will be mobilized by the Maintenance Superintendent or authorized County representative. Snow removal crews will normally operate only during daylight hours, or shortly before daylight, Monday through Friday (approximately 5:00 AM through 5:00 PM), and if possible may be confined to normal work hours of 7:30 AM to 3:30 PM, Monday through Friday.

On Saturdays, Sundays, or holidays, roadways may receive a reduced level of service. The normal level of service will be implemented if conditions warrant.

Snow removal operator shifts are generally limited to a maximum of twelve (12) hours per day for safety reasons; therefore, most routes will not have coverage between 5:00 PM to 5:00 AM the next morning. Snow removal equipment will operate from 5:00 PM to 5:00 AM only in emergency cases as determined under this policy.

Snow removal operations will be halted when:

- Service levels are reached;
- Coverage time has elapsed;
- Conditions are too hazardous;
- Reasonable progress cannot be made; or
- MnDOT closes the roadways in Carlton County under their jurisdiction or when a “**NO TRAVEL**” advisory is issued.

V. **Snow Removal Operations**

A. General

Typically, snow removal operations will consist of the following three phases (1) making the road passable; (2) widening the lanes and applying deicing materials; and (3) cleaning up. Depending on the situation, more than one phase may be accomplished at a time.

- Make the road passable – Clean one lane in each direction.
- Widen the lanes and apply deicing materials – Deicing is done at problem locations on paved roads including intersections, curves, hills, and bridges. Appropriate deicing activities will be used, based on anticipated temperatures and accepted deicing practices. At pavement temperatures below 20 degrees, salt use will be limited, as it becomes ineffective at lower temperatures.
- Clean up – Remove ice and slush off roadway, clean up areas that snow has drifted back in, and widen out intersections.

B. Road Priorities

It is the goal of the Transportation Department to serve the majority of the public in the quickest way possible. With this in mind, roads with higher traffic volumes will *typically* receive higher priority.

County roads along with municipal and township roads with interagency agreements will be given priority over private driveways under contract for snow removal.

Gravel roads and some lower volume pavements may not be plowed during all snow events. Snow removal on gravel roads will be based on amount and type of snow.

VI. **Miscellaneous**

A. Personal Property

Mailboxes, fences, and other personal property damaged by County snow or ice removal activities will be evaluated case by case. Damage resulting from snow debris from the plows is not the responsibility of the County. Only those personal property items that were properly located and installed that were damaged by actual contact with County equipment will be repaired at the County's expense.

- i. Mailboxes – The County will not be responsible for mailboxes damaged as a result of snow removal unless actual contact is made by County equipment. Residents should mark mailboxes in drift prone areas to help snow removal operators avoid them. Claims for damage are to be submitted to the Transportation Department within 48 hours of a storm event for consideration for payment or repair. (*See Mailbox Policy for more details*)
- ii. Fences – The County will not pay for or replace fences damaged as a result of snow removal unless actual contact is made by County equipment. Fence gates shall not obstruct snow removal equipment within the County right-of-way. Fence gates shall not be covered for damage claims. Claims for damaged fences are to be submitted to the Transportation Department within 30 days of a storm event for consideration for payment or repair.
- iii. Obstructions – Obstructions in the road right-of-way such as, but not limited to, hay bales, vehicles, or fences that might cause snow drifting shall be removed by the owners. The County will not be liable for damage to stalled or stranded vehicles on the traveled portion of the roadway or other obstructions that interfere with snow and ice removal. The owners of stalled or stranded vehicles should immediately notify the Carlton County Sheriff's Office. Owners shall remove stalled or stranded vehicles as soon as possible.

B. Residential Snow Removal

Residents are reminded that IT IS UNLAWFUL to plow snow from driveways onto or across public roads, which is a misdemeanor offense (Minnesota State Statute § 160.2715). Piles of snow left on or near the road can freeze into a solid mass creating a hazardous situation for vehicles and snow removal equipment. Vehicular crashes and damage that are caused by snow piles placed in the roadway may result in liability to the property owner.

Snow removal from roadways may result in snow across driveways. County removal of this windrow is infeasible and remains the property owner's responsibility.

C. Stranded Motorists

The County Transportation Department may assist stranded motorist by contacting local law enforcement/emergency personnel. The County Transportation Department **WILL NOT ATTEMPT TO REMOVE ANY STRANDED VEHICLE** from ditches, snow banks, or any other impediment.

VII. **Emergencies/Disasters**

A. Response

In "Emergency" or "Disaster" conditions, the County may deviate from the above-described sequence of service and/or level of service for whatever period of time necessary to appropriately respond to the emergency or disaster. The Transportation Department will attempt to continue its normal snow and ice removal activities as soon as practical after the emergency or disaster condition has ended.

B. Definition/Determination of an Emergency

An "Emergency" condition is defined as a condition where a loss of life or serious injury has occurred or is probable, or where extensive loss of property has occurred or is imminent. The existence of an emergency condition may be declared by the County Engineer, or designee, or the County Sheriff, or designee. Citizen reports of potential emergencies should be directed to the Carlton County Sheriff's Office, which will contact the County Engineer, or designee, for determination of the appropriate response, if any.

C. Definition/Determination of a Disaster

A "Disaster" under this section has the same meaning as an event qualifying as a disaster under Minnesota State Statute § 12.03.

VIII. **Summary**

This policy was developed to provide general guidelines for both County personnel and the traveling public. The policy intends to cover the majority of situations normally encountered during winter storm events. If certain situations arise that are not contemplated in the above policy, the County Maintenance Superintendent, or designee, will deal with them on a case by case basis. Each decision to mobilize snow removal equipment is a judgement call based on the particular weather conditions, past experience, and available resources at the time. Therefore, responses to snow and ice conditions may not strictly adhere to this general policy.

Questions or concerns regarding snow or ice removal or road conditions should be directed to the Carlton County Transportation Department at (218) 384-9150 during regular business hours.

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*** RESOLUTION NO. 18-072***

BY COMMISSIONER: Bodie

ADOPTED: June 12, 2018

WHEREAS, the Carlton County Transportation Department is responsible for the removal of snow and ice from County roads, as well as some township roads and city streets, based interagency agreements; and

WHEREAS, snow and ice removal performance can be affected by a variety of factors such as intensity and duration of the storm event, temperature, wind, and moisture content of the snow; and

WHEREAS, the Carlton County Transportation Department's snow removal priorities reflect a commitment to ensuring the safety of the traveling public.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Carlton County Board of Commissioners does hereby approve the establishment of the Carlton County Transportation Department Snow and Ice Removal Policy (see Exhibit A). It is the intent of this policy to provide realistic expectations and improve citizen awareness of snow and ice removal procedures.

Upon motion by Bodie, seconded by Brenner, and carried, the above resolution was adopted.

Yea votes: Peterson, Zmyslony, Brenner, Proulx and Bodie

Nay votes: None

Absent: None

I, Paul G. Gassert, Auditor of the County of Carlton, do hereby certify that I have compared the foregoing with the original resolution filed in my office on the 12th day of June, 2018, and that the same is a true and correct copy of the whole thereof.

WITNESS MY HAND AND SEAL OF OFFICE in Carlton, Minnesota, this 12th day of June, 2018.

Paul G. Gassert
Carlton County Auditor/Treasurer

