Winter Street Maintenance

Winter street maintenance involves more than just plowing streets. It also includes application of anti-icing treatments, snow removal and de-icing of select public sidewalks and trails, tree trimming, sign repair, stormwater system maintenance and even pothole patching. Snow and ice control on City streets are top priorities for Public Works during winter months.

Plowing Priorities

The City has a Winter Maintenance Policy defining snow and ice management objectives and procedures. The City prioritizes snow removal on primary roadways and collector streets, followed by residential streets, cul-de-sacs, alleys, and then sidewalks and trails. Other agencies, like the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) and Dakota County, clear snow from roadways they are responsible for. For instance, streets like 70th St., 80th St., Concord Blvd., Babcock Tr., Argenta Blvd., Barnes Ave. and Rich Valley Blvd. are county roads, and Dakota County plows those streets.

The City may not clear snowfalls of two inches or less, depending on the weather forecast and the likelihood of these small snowfalls melting due to existing or applied de-icing chemicals.

Sidewalk & Trail Maintenance

In 2023, the City Council approved updates to the City's Winter Maintenance Policy and made clarifications to the City ordinance related to removal of snow, ice, dirt and rubbish on sidewalks and trails throughout the community. These updates were intended to clarify the responsibilities for clearing snow and ice from sidewalks throughout the community, and better assign City staff and equipment for primary sidewalks and trails. Here is an overview:

- The City has over 80 miles of public sidewalks and trails throughout the community.

- The City maintains approximately 45 miles of sidewalks and trails by performing snow removal along primary roadways and around schools and public transit facilities (i.e., bus stops).

- Property owners are responsible for maintaining sidewalks that are immediately adjacent to their property, including removal of snow and ice within 24 hours of it falling.

- Property owners that are part of a homeowner's association (HOA) should consult with their HOA bylaws as to who is responsible for snow removal.

Safety Around Plows

A loaded plow truck can weigh more than 50,000 pounds. It cannot maneuver as well as the average passenger vehicle, and it has much larger blind spots where the driver cannot see vehicles or pedestrians. In addition to driving the vehicle, drivers are simultaneously operating the primary plow blade, the side (wing) plow blade and the placement of de-icing chemicals on the roadway. We ask that everyone follow these safety guidelines during the winter months:

- Do not shovel, plow or blow snow into or across a street.

- Do not play on, or build snow forts in, snow piles on the boulevard or in the center of a cul-de-sac.

- Never follow a plow truck from closer than 100 feet.

- Never drive into a snow cloud or pass a plow.

- Slow down and drive carefully. Even if a street looks clear of snow, it may still be icy.

Boulevard Areas

The City requires a clear zone on the boulevard along City streets. Any object that could be damaged by maintenance activities should be removed from this area. This excludes mailboxes that comply with U.S. Postal Service specifications. Any other item placed in the boulevard is the responsibility of the property owner, including, but not limited to, trees, landscaping, fencing, irrigation systems, basketball hoops, etc.

If your mailbox or boulevard lawn is damaged by direct contact with a City plow, please call the IGH Public Works Maintenance Facility at 651-450-4309. Per the City's Winter Maintenance Policy, the City is not responsible for damage caused by snow or ice that is thrown or pushed by a plow into a mailbox or boulevard. Turf that is damaged will be replaced in the spring with topsoil and seed.

Here are three ways that property owners can protect their property and reduce the likelihood of plow damage:

- Shovel around your mailbox after a heavy snowfall. It will help your letter carrier access the mailbox and reduce the potential for snow buildup under the mailbox, making room for future plowing.

- Add reflective flags or tape to your mailbox to make it more visible at night.

- Place reflective markers along your curb and at the end of driveways to help plows identify the edge of the road.

Parking

Per City Ordinance Title 6, Chapter 3, Section 6-3-6, it is unlawful to park a vehicle on any City street between the hours of 3 a.m. and 6 a.m. from Nov. 1 through Apr. 1.

Fire Hydrants

The City does not remove snow around fire hydrants. Residents and businesses are encouraged to clear snow from hydrants that are located adjacent to their property to aid emergency services. To learn more, visit *ighmn.gov/Hydrants*.

Contact Information

Have a sidewalk or trail adjacent to your property and unsure who is responsible for snow removal? Curious about what other items the City has in its Winter Maintenance Policy? Visit the City's website at *ighmn.gov/WinterMaintenance*.

Salt Smart!

Combat ice and protect water resources this winter season! Excessive use of de-icer and salt on roadways, sidewalks and driveways can pollute both soil and water resources. Even small quantities can negatively impact drinking water, plants, fish and wildlife. **Make a pledge to *salt smart* this season by following these four steps:**

SHOVEL. Clear walkways before snow turns to ice. Apply salt only if needed.

SCATTER. Use salt only where critical. Aim for three inches of space between salt granules.

SWITCH. Salt doesn't melt ice in temperatures below 15 degrees Fahrenheit. Use sand or grit for traction when it is too cold for salt to be effective.

SWEEP. Clean up excess salt, sand and de-icer to save and reuse as needed.

Pick up a FREE SALT CUP at the front desk at City Hall, which will help remind you of how much salt to use this winter, while supplies last.