

TOWN OF GRAND RAPIDS

POLICY AND PROCEDURE

SNOW AND ICE CONTROL

The Town of Grand Rapids' roads are subject to freezing rain, ice, snow and snow drifting any time during fall, winter, and spring months. Normally winter storms can be expected during the months of November through April. The responsibility for keeping vehicular traffic moving on Grand Rapids' approximately 100 miles of roads and streets, following the snow and ice storms, lies with the Town's Public Works Crew Leader under the direction of the Town Board Chairperson and Supervisors.

The Town is currently responsible for the maintenance of approximately 100 miles of roads. Approximately 37.25 miles of the 100 miles are classified into priority winter maintenance practices. The balance of roads and streets will be plowed and sanded if there is more than 3" to 4" of snow on the roads and streets.

The Town's goal is to maintain the roads in as good winter driving conditions as weather, equipment, and budget restraints allow.

Planning and preparing for snow and ice removal is difficult due to the uniqueness of each storm. No two storms are ever identical. The interrelationship of factors such as rate of snowfall, moisture content, accumulation, temperature, time of day, and wind velocity determines the uniqueness of each storm. The Town's operations must be flexible enough to combat the unique aspect of each storm.

The amount of snow accumulation and time of day at which the storm occurs has a significant effect. High wind conditions may cause roads to quickly fill in again with drifted snow. The temperature at the time of the storms will also affect conditions. Snow falling on warm pavement will clear off easily. However, a moderate storm, coupled with a prolonged subfreezing period will greatly increase the removal effort. Light, dry snows handle easier than heavy wet snow.

During snow and ice storms, the Town's Public Works Crew will respond to emergency conditions to the extent practicable. The Town will not respond to unverified emergency requests direct from the public. The request must come from the appropriate emergency response agency (i.e. fire, law enforcement, ambulance). The Town's Public Works Crew will not plow or sand on private property without authorization from the Town Board Chairperson. The Town will not take any responsibility for removal of snow that is plowed into private driveways from the road clearing operation. Driveway maintenance is the property owner's responsibility.

CIRCUMSTANCES OR EXCEPTIONS TO THIS POLICY

This policy will be adjusted to meet specific storm circumstances. Listed below are several special conditions:

- Plowing of snow will be limited in storms early in the fall and late spring only on gravel surface roads, due to the lack of frost to support the snow plows. Plowing gravel off the road creates a hazard and is very expensive to the taxpayer.
- Plowing may be limited on paved roads during spring break up.
- Operations may be suspended or reduced if fuel is not available due to lack of electricity at the Town Garage, qualified operators are not available, and/or equipment breakdowns occur.
- The Town Board Chairperson has the authority to suspend snow and ice control operations. This may be done in severe storm conditions when there is danger to equipment operators or it is not practical or cost effective to continue.

The State of Wisconsin Statutes 81.15 states that a municipality has three (3) weeks to plow snow off roads, however, it is the Town's policy to plow as soon as possible.

WHERE AND WHO TO CALL FOR INFORMATION AND COMPLAINTS

Information about road conditions and operations can be obtained from the Grand Rapids Municipal Building at 424-1821 during regular working hours. After hours, residents can call the Town Board Chairperson or Town Board Supervisors at their respective residences.

Complaints on practices and procedures should be directed to the Public Works Crew Leader. Each complaint will be investigated. The Leader may make a decision on the complaint and if necessary the complaint will be discussed with the Town Board. Final action on complaints rests with the Town Board.

Complaints given to family members of town employees or elected officials in a respectful manner will be relayed to proper town personnel. Town Board members, town employees, spouses and family members will not take any action to rude or belligerent complaints.

Complaints regarding individual operators must be submitted in writing, signed and filed at the Municipal Building during office hours. The complaint will be reviewed by the Public Works Leader and if necessary, will be referred to the Town Board at their next regularly scheduled Town Board meeting. All persons involved will have the opportunity to be present at that time.

MAILBOXES

While plow equipment operators are advised to be cautious near mailboxes, on occasion mailboxes are struck. A properly installed mailbox will permit a snowplow to clear the snow near it. Operators must report these occurrences to their Crew Leader. The Crew Leader must also realize that mailboxes can be knocked over without the driver being aware of the fact. It is important to investigate each and every occurrence.

Reports on mailbox damage may come from citizens rather than an equipment operator. If this occurs, the Crew Leader will investigate the incident as soon as possible. If it is clear that the damage was done by town equipment striking a mailbox, the Crew Leader will determine if it is possible to repair the damage using road maintenance personnel. The Crew Leader will document each time damage is investigated.

It is the Town's policy to pay for a replacement when a mailbox has been struck by town equipment. Replacement of mailboxes and/or mailbox posts by the Town of Grand Rapids shall be limited to \$75.00 per mail box. Special decorative mailboxes and/or posts will not be provided. If the owner wishes to install a decorative mailbox and/or post to meet a subdivision's standards, it shall be at the owner's expense. The Town will reinstall a standard mailbox on a 4"X4" post to replace those damaged. However, if the damage was done by the weight of the snow being pushed to the curb or shoulder, the Town will not honor such a claim. Be sure to keep this in mind during the investigation.

The Town will do mailbox repair work after snow plowing operation of the current storm is completed. This will be completed to the best of our ability. The Town assumes no liability for mailbox damage or losses.

LAWN DAMAGE

Most lawn damage will occur because a truck with the plow blades rides over the shoulder and rips up the sod adjacent to the shoulder. This occurs more often in early or late snow storms when there is little or no frost in the ground. The Town will not repair the lawns that are in the right-of-way of a Town road. The Town assumes no liability for lawn damage or losses.

VEHICULAR DAMAGE

Anytime a Town vehicle is involved in an accident with another vehicle, the appropriate law enforcement officials will be notified to investigate at the scene. It is important that all crashes are reported no matter how minor. It is a violation of the law if such accidents are not reported to the proper authorities immediately. The Crew Leader should also try and go to the scene and perform his/her own investigation. It is important to have a written police report on file for any future claims against the Town which may be initiated.

Drivers must also report any damage to the vehicle they have been driving when it occurs. The Crew Leader should be consulted as to whether it is necessary for the vehicle to be brought into the garage immediately or if the damage can be inspected at the end of the operation.

If there is an injury at a crash, the driver of the Town vehicle will take a drug and alcohol test. The drug and alcohol test will be done as soon as possible after the accident. We will also ask the Wood County Sheriff's Department to do the investigation of an accident and give us a written report of the accident.

DRIVEWAYS

The Town does not have any obligation nor will we clean the snow out of any driveways. Considering the large number of driveways in the Town, it would be too costly and not practical to use Town personnel and equipment to clean private driveways.

Pushing or blowing snow or other materials onto or across highways from private driveways can cause accidents and death, and is prohibited by Wisconsin State Statutes 86.01, 86.07, 346.94 and 941.30, and by Town Ordinance No. 4. Violations of the Statute or Ordinance will be referred to the proper law enforcement agency.

Temporary snow marker guides placed along the roadway, if placed following the guidelines set forth by the Town Board, shall be permitted.

Guidelines are as follows:

- Only breakaway markers will be permitted.
- Markers must not be placed closer than three (3) feet to the edge of the blacktop.
- Markers must not be placed closer than ten (10) feet from each other.

Markers not following the above guidelines may be removed from their location by a Town Crew member and notified by a tag indicating incorrect placement. A subsequent failure to follow the above guidelines after receiving notice will be subject to removal by the Town of Grand Rapids and/or possible forfeiture as per Road Ordinance No. 19 and Schedule of Fees and Forfeitures Ordinance No. 39.

In the use of the temporary snow markers, the residents understand that the Town of Grand Rapids will not be liable for any breakage or replacement of said markers.

OVERTIME POLICY

The determination of when to use over-time in the removal of snow or ice shall be made by the Public Works Lead Person or Town Board Chairperson. The need for over-time shall be established from the severity of a storm or emergency condition.

ROUTES

The crew will plow priority roads first and salt. Then if time permits, they will plow other streets and sand the curves, intersections and hills.

During a light to moderate (less than 3") snowstorm, just the priority roads will be plowed and salted; and the curves, intersections and hills will be sanded. If time permits and if it is determined the secondary roads need to be done, all other roads *will be plowed* at regular times without working over-time. This may take 3-4 days to go over all of those roads.

When there is more than 4 inches of snow, the Town Crew will plow all the roads.

The snow and ice map is located at the Municipal Building and can be seen during regular working hours.

When there is more than 6 inches of snow and/or drifting, this is a severe storm and the priority roads may be plowed more than once before the balance of roads are done. It will be the Town's policy to plow all subdivision roads before re-plowing any first-plowed subdivision roads. When the snow storm stops, all roads will be plowed, salted and sanded as time permits.

The preceding policy is only a guideline and can be changed at the discretion of the Crew Leader or Town Board Chairperson at any time as deemed necessary.

ADOPTED BY TOWN BOARD ON: September 22, 2009

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2009

AMENDED DATES: January 19, 2017
December 13, 2023
April 8, 2026