
SNOW & ICE CONTROL PROCEDURE

SECTION 1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this procedure is to establish a clear and consistent operational framework for winter roadway maintenance in the City of Richland Center. The procedure outlines the responsibilities and priorities to be followed by the Department of Public Works to ensure public safety and mobility during snow and ice events, while also balancing environmental and fiscal considerations.

SECTION 2. SCOPE

This procedure applies to all City-owned and maintained transportation infrastructure, including streets, alleys, public parking lots, cemetery roads, and access routes to critical facilities such as schools, emergency services, and the municipal airport. It also provides general guidance for coordination with other City departments and sets public expectations regarding service levels and responsibilities for sidewalk and driveway maintenance.

SECTION 3. DEFINITIONS

- **Snow Event:** Any period of measurable snowfall that impacts roadway conditions and triggers snow removal or salting operations.
- **Plowing Threshold:** Standard snow accumulation (generally 2 inches or more) at which full City plowing operations are typically initiated.
- **Bare Pavement Policy:** The City does not maintain a "bare pavement" policy; roads may remain partially snow-covered between events.
- **Priority Routes:** A classification system used to determine plowing order based on traffic volume, emergency access, and public use.
- **Major Collectors:** A road that collects traffic from local streets and funnels it to arterial roads, serving mainly intra-county travel. (Ex. USH 14, STH 80, STH 56, CTH AA, CTH Q, CTH Y, CTH OO, and CTH N)
- **Minor Collectors:** A road that collects traffic from local roads and directs it to major collector or arterial roads. (Ex. Court Street, Church Street, Park Street, Industrial Drive and Westside Drive)
- **Sand/Salt Mixture:** A material applied after plowing on lower-priority roads to enhance traction.
- **Passable Condition:** Road surface has been cleared to allow for safe vehicle travel at reduced winter driving speeds, even if snow or ice is still present in spots.

SECTION 4. PROCEDURE STATEMENTS

1. GENERAL

The ability to react promptly and decisively to varying winter weather conditions with regard to snow removal and ice control on City streets is recognized to be an important and necessary function of government for the safety and well-being of the public. The following procedure has been established to provide information for the public and establish guidelines for Public Works staff to follow in order to ensure consistent practices for snow and ice control during winter storm events. The Department's goal is to have all public roadways, parking lots and publicly maintained sidewalks passable within a reasonable amount of time after a given winter event. Plowing priorities reflect a commitment to ensure that key roads are kept open to serve critical facilities. Each decision to mobilize City forces for the clearing and control of snow and ice is a judgment call based on the particular weather conditions combined with past experience along with the resources available at the time and therefore may not adhere strictly to this general procedure.

2. **READINESS**

The Director of Public Works maintains the supervisory duty to see that all equipment and personnel are ready for winter street maintenance and that sufficient quantities of salt and de-icing material are available.

3. **ROAD SALT (DE-ICING MATERIAL) APPLICATION**

- Due to environmental requirements/concerns and economical restraints, it is not the City's intent to provide "bare pavement" driving conditions at all times and at all locations during the winter season. City wide application of road salt will generally be done, however, salt applications will be held to a minimum, as determined by the Public Works Director based on the type of storm, roadway conditions, temperature, effectiveness of application and seasonal reserves.

4. **PUBLIC EXPECTATIONS**

- City-wide snow plowing operations are generally initiated once snow accumulation reaches or exceeds 2 inches. The Department of Public Works strives to have all City-maintained streets, alleys, and public lots plowed and cleared within 24 hours of the conclusion of a snow event, weather and resource conditions permitting.
- Due to factors such as snow intensity, timing, duration, equipment availability, and back-to-back storm events, there may be variations in exact response times. The City prioritizes main arterials, emergency access routes, and school zones to ensure critical access first.

5. **ROUTE PRIORITY**

- Priority 1 – Arterials, Major Collectors, steep grades and school approximate areas (Continuous salt)
- Priority 2 – Minor Collectors, Ambulance Garage, Police Station & Fire Stations
- Priority 3 – Local Streets and Cul-de-sacs
- Priority 4 – Alleys
- Priority 5 – Parking Lots (Some lots will be plowed early due to parking situations)
- Priority 6 – Cemetery
- Priority 7 – Airport

6. **STAFFING LIMITS**

In an effort to protect the public and the City's PW staff against harm, 16 hours max of plowing followed by 8 hours of rest will be acceptable practice. The Department will make every effort to abide by the requirement, however, there may be an extreme event where following the requirement could put public safety at a greater risk than this best practice. When these conditions warrant such a decision, the Director of Public Works, Mayor, and Police Chief may all be involved in the decision.

7. **RESPONSE PROCEDURES**

- Normal Working Hours – Street conditions will be monitored during the Department of Public Works normal working hours (7:30 a.m. to 3: p.m.) by the Director of Public Works Director or his/her designee.

- Non-Working Hours – During non-working hours, the Richland Center Police Department will monitor changing street conditions and will promptly notify the Director of Public Works or his/her designee of icy conditions or snow accumulation causing slippery conditions.
- Depending on the severity of the situation, an appropriate number of trucks will be dispatched to begin operations. The Director of Public Works or his/her designee shall make the final decision on dispatching plowing operations.

8. STANDARD ICE-CONTROL AND SNOW PLOWING PROCEDURES

- The Director of Public Works may, after being notified by the Police Department and reviewing the necessity for ice control or plowing, call the necessary personnel via telephone and give them instructions.
- The City personnel normally involved in snow plowing and ice control operations includes all Public Works Crew members.
- Crews will begin salting and/or plowing based on priority listing.
- If a snowstorm begins in the afternoon or early evening, the main arterial streets will be kept open and citywide plowing/salting operations will be started early the next morning when traffic volumes have decreased.
- Snowplowing procedures in the downtown business district will vary depending on the amount of snow accumulations.
- It is unrealistic to completely prevent snow from being pushed into driveways when the streets are plowed. Due to limited parking restrictions and enforcement, the Public Works Department must make several passes down a street over an extended period of time to get the snow to the curb. Failure to get the snow to the curb can result in narrowing of the roadways and an increase of flooding potential when the snow melts.

9. RESIDENT RESPONSIBILITY

- To avoid damage to the curb-side mail boxes, snowplow trucks must keep a safe distance away. It is expected that property owners will have to clear around mailboxes.
- Residents are responsible for clearing their own driveways and any abutting sidewalks.
- Snow removal from crosswalk radiuses and handicap ramps is the responsibility of the adjacent property owner unless otherwise posted.

10. MAILBOX INSTALLATION, RIGHT-OF-WAY, AND DAMAGE POLICY

A. Right-of-Way Authority

Pursuant to Wis. Stat. §§ 86.02 and 86.03, the City maintains authority over the public right-of-way for highway maintenance and snow removal. Mailboxes placed within the right-of-way are permitted encroachments and remain the property owner's responsibility. Placement does not create a duty upon the City to repair or replace damage resulting from lawful snow and ice control operations.

B. Required Installation Standards

Mailboxes within the right-of-way must comply with USPS standards:

- Height: 41–45 inches from road surface to bottom of mailbox or mail entry point
- Setback: 6–8 inches back from face of curb or edge of pavement

- Support Post: 4" x 4" wood post or 2" diameter standard steel or aluminum pipe
 - Post burial depth not to exceed 24 inches
 - No rigid, masonry, decorative, oversized, or concrete-filled supports
- Non-compliant installations are not eligible for review or reimbursement.

C. City Liability Limitations

The City makes reasonable efforts to avoid contact with mailboxes during snow and ice control operations. However, the City shall not be responsible for repair, replacement, reimbursement, or compensation for:

- Mailboxes that do not meet USPS installation standards
- Mailboxes installed within the traveled way or too close to pavement
- Mailboxes mounted below required height
- Decorative, masonry, oversized, or rigid installations
- Snow displacement from plows does not constitute equipment contact.

D. Direct Equipment Contact

If a USPS-compliant mailbox is directly struck by identifiable City equipment, the property owner may submit a claim for review. Reimbursement, if approved, is limited to the reasonable replacement cost of a standard USPS-compliant mailbox and post. Final determination rests with the Director of Public Works or designee.

E. Claim Procedure

Claims must be submitted in writing within seven (7) calendar days and include address, date, description, and photographs. Failure to timely file constitutes waiver of claim. The City may inspect the installation prior to determination. Submission of a claim does not imply City liability.

F. Property Owner Responsibility

Property owners are responsible for compliance with USPS standards, routine maintenance of mailbox structures, clearing snow from around and in front of mailboxes, and repairing or replacing non-conforming or damaged mailboxes.

SECTION 5. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- **Director of Public Works:** Oversees snow and ice operations, determines response level, ensures readiness, and coordinates with leadership.
- **Public Works Crew Lead:** Supervises field operations, coordinates crew deployment, and reports needs to the Director.
- **Public Works Staff:** Operate plow/salt equipment, report hazards, and follow safety and shift protocols.
- **Police Department:** Monitors roads after hours and notifies Public Works of hazardous conditions.
- **Residents & Property Owners:** Clear adjacent sidewalks/driveways, follow parking rules, and do not push snow into streets

SECTION 6. REVIEW AND AMENDMENT

- This procedure shall be reviewed and updated internally by administrative staff as needed.

SECTION 7. EFFECTIVE DATE

This procedure shall take effect on November 4, 2025.