

Town of Grafton

Department of Public Works



Snow and Policy and Procedures

Mission Statement

The objective at the Town of Grafton Department of Public Works (DPW) is to remove snow and ice from the roadways as safely, quickly, efficiently, and cost-effectively as possible, to restore normal traffic conditions and services to the residents of Grafton. It is our goal to obtain bare and dry pavement conditions at the earliest practical time following the conclusion of a winter storm. This policy is used as a guideline to assist management in making well-informed, judgmental decisions in a consistent manner for each event requiring snow and ice removal.

Responsibilities

The Highway, Cemetery and Parks and Sewer Departments are responsible for removing snow and ice from approximately 108 miles of Town owned roadways. Additionally, we maintain all town-owned parking lots (Town Hall, Police Station, Fire Stations, Library) school parking lots, and cemetery roadways. We also maintain town sidewalks in predesignated areas to provide a safe walkway for the elderly, school children and pedestrians.

Before the Storm

A typical event starts with anti-icing operations. This process begins sometime in advance of a storm at a time designated by the Highway Department Superintendent, at the request of the Police Department, or as soon as conditions warrant. This process prevents the snow and ice from becoming compacted and frozen to the road surface. Top priority is given to the Town's main arterial corridors followed by secondary roads and hills, and lastly the neighborhoods.

During the Storm

Plowing procedures depend on the type and length of the storm, and the conditions expected after the storm. Generally, plowing commences when there is more than one inch of snow on the ground or expected. However, plows may be called out at any time depending on various factors such as when rain or freezing rain is expected to follow. Each and every storm is different, and our main objective is to get the roads safe and clear of snow / ice as quickly and efficiently as possible. Our first responsibility is to keep the major roads and hills open, once the main roads are open we move to the secondary roads and neighborhoods. The plows then continue to clear roads on their assigned routes in that same pattern until the storm ends.

After the Storm

Just because the precipitation has ended the plowing and salting may have not. Crews continue to monitor roads for icy spots and drifting snow. Storms with high snow accumulations require the plowing equipment to “widen out” roads by pushing the accumulated snow back to the curb line or gutter line and clearing intersections to make room for the next storm. The roads are treated with an application of salt to maintain melting action and an ice-free surface for as long as possible. In addition to the roads, the DPW is also responsible to clear the sidewalks. Sidewalk clearing occurs at the end of the storm with the priority being those around school zones.

How You Can Help

Please be patient. Winter weather is an inconvenience and can be frustrating. The DPW’s primary responsibility is to keep the roads clear and our operations can take place for hours beyond the end of the snow fall.

There will be occasions that our snowplowing activities will impact an already cleared driveway. Before your final driveway cleanup, please check the street. If it is clean and opened up to its full width, then you should be OK. If not, be assured that the plow truck will be back. Like water, moving snow will follow the path of least resistance which, unfortunately, will be your driveway, this is not intentional or personal.

If it snows on your trash collection day, place your recycling bins and trash bags away from the edge of the road. Our plow operators cannot plow around bins and bags, and cannot stop to pick up spilled bins or trash bags.

Do not allow your children to play in or on roadside snowbanks. With reduced visibility during a storm, the heights of the snowbanks, and the need for Snowplows to travel at constant speeds they cannot slow down quickly enough to prevent injury to children playing in snowbanks.

Any personal property within the Town’s rights-of-way, including walls, fences, mailboxes, irrigation systems, etc., is placed there at the owner’s risk. Property such as basketball hoops, located near the edge of pavement should be removed to avoid damage to snow equipment and the personal property. The town does not assume responsibility for replacing damaged private installations in the Town’s rights-of-way.

State Law prohibits residents and private contractors from shoveling, blowing, plowing, or throwing snow onto public streets or sidewalks.