

# Snow & Ice Management Policy



**Town of Medway  
Massachusetts**

## **General**

The purpose of this policy/guide is to provide a general overview of the Town of Medway, MA snow and ice program, establish procedures for our snow and ice management on public ways, review important safety and environmental requirements, answer frequently asked questions, and most importantly, seek your support in providing safe streets and sidewalks during snow and ice emergencies. The intent of establishing such a policy/guide is to provide a uniform understanding of the priorities and procedures used to combat snow and ice related conditions and create reasonable expectations.

The responsibility for providing snow and ice management for the Town of Medway infrastructure including over 100 miles of roadways and cul-de-sacs rest entirely with the Department of Public Works (DPW). The DPW also provides snow and ice management to all municipal buildings including schools, often with assistance from other departments. Snow and ice management is considered emergency work because pavement must be cleared any time of the day or night. The DPW will salt during ice and wet snowstorms and plow the snow off the roadways during the more significant storms. During a typical Medway winter, 2500 tons of salt is used to keep the roads safe for all drivers (average is based on total salt used between 2020 and 2025).

The Town's snow and ice management strategy has been carefully and professionally prepared to meet the needs of the community and comply with public safety, public health, and environmental health standards. The resulting plan follows clearly identified routes when removing snow and ice from streets, sidewalks, and Town parking areas. The DPW performs the majority of the salting operations in Town. For snowplowing and snow removal work, the Department also utilizes local contractors to complement the Town's fleet of 29 vehicles.

## **Snowplowing and Salting**

The responsibility for ordering personnel and equipment into service for winter maintenance operation rests primarily with the Highway Superintendent or his designee. The Police Department, during off hours, keeps watch and assists in notification to the Highway Superintendent or his designee of needed service.

Generally, DPW crews plow when 2 to 3 inches of snow has accumulated on the roadways. The response time will depend on the moisture of the snow, timing of the storm, duration, freezing rain and blowing snow. Snow has different weights and compacting properties. Fluffy, dry snow requires less salt and plowing than heavy, wet snow. Wet snow may result in very slippery conditions especially when the newly fallen snow freezes on the pavement. Medway endorses a "bare pavement" policy to snow removal. This does not mean bare, dry pavement should be expected after each snowfall or ice storm. Furthermore, this does not mean that the streets will be

free of ice and snow. It does mean that our snow and ice management techniques are geared toward reaching dry pavement. Expect major roads, which receive priority treatment and substantial traffic volume, to be clear first. Secondary and neighborhood roads may take several days after a storm to clear.

The time of a storm can also determine when crews will begin their cleanup. Certain areas of the Town have a greater intensity of use and priority for maintenance to serve the users. The concern of safety, general welfare and duration of travel necessitates that priority be given to certain areas over others. During high commuting times, crews will make every effort to keep the major roadways and school bus routes clear of snow and ice. Secondary and side streets will be cleared as soon as possible. Sidewalks are the last priority. Top priority will be given to the heavily traveled roads to ensure everyone's safety. Snow that falls on these roads often becomes packed by cars, making it more difficult to scrape off. During evening and early morning storms, DPW crews usually have ample time to prepare the roads for the commuting hours. Be aware; storms extending over 12 hours or more will require rest periods to ensure the safety of both our drivers and the public. Typically, we will be complete with primary response 2 to 3 hours after most snow accumulation has stopped.

The duration of the storm also plays an important role in snowplowing and salting operations. Storms of extended duration tax all available resources (salt, equipment, and employees) to keep the roads open over an extended period of time. Four inches of snow that falls over a 24-hour period will require more material and man-hours than six inches of snow that falls over an eight-hour period. DPW crews will be immediately dispatched with salt when freezing rain falls. Motorists and pedestrians are advised to stay off the roadways until the pavement can be treated. This is also true for sidewalks. Because of high sun, snow that falls in late February and March will melt much faster than snow that falls during December and January, thereby decreasing the salting and plowing time. **Residents are responsible for snowplowing and snow removal on their own property including all private roadways in Town.**

**Placing snow or from a plow, shovel, blower or by any other means on any portion of a public way is strictly prohibited and is a violation of Medway's General Bylaw Article XIII, Penal Law, Section 13.17 (a).**

NOTE: Contractors or residents cannot dispose of snow on Town property without the permission of the Select Board. Please do not dump snow in the street or on the sidewalk.

## **Snowplowing for Municipal Properties**

The DPW will plow and remove the snow from parking areas associated with the following facilities and locations:

Town Hall	Medway High School
Police Station	Medway Middle School
Fire Station #1 and #2	Burke-Memorial Elementary School
Senior Center	McGovern Elementary School
Library	
Water Treatment Plant and wells	
Parks and Recreation Building	
Choate Park	
Oakland Park	
Thayer House	
Jacob Ide House	
Evergreen Cemetery	

Snow and ice management on walkways and entryways is also completed by the DPW for these public buildings, except for Medway Public Schools who use their own staff to clear walkways and entryways around their buildings.

## **Sidewalk Plowing**

The DPW will plow sidewalks along central routes that are heavily traveled by children on their way to and from school. The following routes are considered **Primary Routes**:

Barber Street	North Street
Broad Street	Pond Street
Cassidy Street	Sanford Street
Legion Avenue	School Street
Center Street	
Highland Street where sidewalks exist	
Oakland Street where sidewalks exist	
Village Street from Center Street to Oakland Street	
Holliston Street from Village Street to Ellis Street	
Lovering Street from Holliston Street to Lovering Heights	

Main Street from Highland Street to Oakland Street  
Maple Street from Lovering Street to Delmar Road  
Summer Street from Milford Street to Holliston Town Line

In addition, the following routes are **Secondary Routes** and may be done as time and equipment permit:

Cottage Street  
High Street  
Lincoln Street  
Main Street from Highland Street to Bellingham Town Line  
Milford Street from Main Street to Summer Street  
Summer Street from Milford Street to Main Street  
Village Street from Island Road to Oakland Street  
Village Street from Center Street to Franklin Street  
Franklin Street from Waterview Circle to Main Street  
West Street from Glen Brook Apartments to Main Street

Sidewalk plowing will not begin until after the snow has stopped falling and plowing has ceased. If we have back-to-back storms, extended storms, or equipment problems, we may not clear sidewalks immediately after the storm. **DPW crews are not required to salt sidewalks.**

Your assistance is important in making sure snow is cleared from the sidewalk in front of your property for streets not listed above. **Residents and business owners share in the responsibility to provide safe passage in front of their properties.** Be a good neighbor and help those that are not able.

## **Parking Ban during Snow Events**

Please respect parking restrictions. Snowplows have to navigate many narrow streets, and vehicles that remain on the street may be plowed in, damaged by a skidding vehicle, and interfere with snow operations. On-street parking is prohibited during snow plowing operations. Vehicles parked on the street during will be tagged, and if such parking interferes with snow removal, they will be towed. The on-street parking ban is enforced by the Medway Police Department. Parking on sidewalks is illegal and will be subject to fines and/or being towed.

## **Fire Hydrants/Catch Basins**

During winter months, fire hydrants must be accessible and catch basins must be kept free and clear of snow and ice. This ensures the safety of your neighborhood in the event of an emergency. Keeping catch basins clear of snow and ice will reduce the possibility of street flooding during heavy rains or snow melting periods. There are over 600 fire hydrants and over 2400 catch basins in Medway. Also, all DPW Divisions assist with snow and ice operations. As a result of this, along with normal duties, they remove snow from hydrants only when snow depths make it very difficult to locate and access them. Under such conditions, the Water & Sewer Division often works with the Fire Department; however, it is a time-consuming and slow process.

**Your assistance is important in making sure snow is cleared from hydrants and catch basins. Please shovel the hydrant and catch basin nearest your house after each storm to ensure your property's protection.**

## **Property Damage**

During operations throughout any given winter, a certain amount of damage to Town and private property may be incurred by the snow removal forces. If a Town plow or truck damages a mailbox either through direct contact or due to forces of the snow rolling off the plow, you may file for \$50.00 flat rate compensation. Such compensation may only be paid once per snow season. Mailboxes struck more than once in a season should be relocated or constructed in a manner not susceptible to damage by plowing.

In addition to mailboxes, a property owner who installs or places any decorative materials, vegetation, or other item within the Town's right-of-way, does so at his/her own risk. The Town is not responsible for repairing, replacing, or compensating for any such items placed in the public way. Be aware that this area may extend 5 to 10 feet or more off the actual paved road surface. You can help minimize damage by putting up roadside markers about a foot off the pavement. This helps the drivers know where the edge of pavement is during severe storms.

## **Departure From Policy**

The Town recognizes that the conditions may be so unusual or unexpected that a departure from these general policies should be authorized. Therefore, when conditions warrant, the Public Works Director, in consultation with the Highway Superintendent or his/her designee, may order a departure from these general rules when, in the opinion of the Director, the conditions require such action.

## **Minimizing Environmental Impact**

“While we are all aware of the threats to public safety caused by snow, collected snow that is contaminated with road salt, sand, litter, and automotive pollutants such as oil also threatens public health and the environment.” – Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection.<sup>1</sup>

Maintaining road safety while minimizing environmental impacts is dependent upon efficient storage, application, and disposal of snow and deicing materials. The Department of Public Works is charged with this task and must stay in compliance with U.S. EPA and MassDEP stormwater management requirements. To meet road treatment requirements, the DPW aims to:

- Reduce the amount of road salt used and designate reduced salt areas near wetlands
- Adjust the amount of salt used based on site-specific characteristics, such as road width and design, traffic concentration, and proximity to surface waters
- Use the appropriate road treatment material for the weather conditions
- Use alternative materials such as calcium chloride, and calcium magnesium acetate in especially sensitive areas.
- Use calibration devices for spreaders in trucks to help DPW crew control the amount of road treatment applied. The Town’s salt storage location and facility comply with Standard 4 and 5 of the Massachusetts Stormwater Handbook because it meets the following:
- Located outside the 100-year floodplain, Zone II, and 200 feet from established rivers or estuaries.
- Store salt in a covered shelter on an impervious pad. Direct internal flow to a collection system and direct external flow around the shelter.

The Town’s snow disposal location complies with Standard 4 of the Massachusetts Stormwater Handbook because it meets the following:

- Located on a pervious surface away from water resources and wells.
- Prepared with silt fencing or the equivalent on the down gradient side of the site, cleared of debris prior to using the site, and cleared of debris at the end of the snow season (no later than May 15).

The DPW staff are trained annually on the snow and ice policy and procedures.

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<sup>1</sup> Massachusetts Stormwater Handbook. (2008). Vol. 2, ch.1, page 17. (vol. 1, ch.1, pg.9).

## **Conclusion**

Further information on snowplowing, snow removal, parking regulations and suggestions can be directed to the DPW at 508-533-3275 during normal business hours or 508-533-3212 during a snow emergency. For storm watch information concerning school or business closing, watch the local news stations and check the town website and social media platforms.

## **Questions and Complaints Received Most Often by the DPW**

### **Q. Can I push snow from my property onto the sidewalk or street?**

A. NO. A Town bylaw restricts this act. Additionally, such action may bring liability if an accident occurs. This also increases the Town's costs for snow operations.

### **Q. Do some streets receive priority during a snowstorm?**

A. YES. Major roadways, school bus routes, and hills are top priorities.

### **Q. Does the Town really need a parking ban?**

A. YES. Snowplowing and removal are difficult; parked cars on the roadways not only increase the number of hazards, but also the time it takes to remove the snow.

### **Q. Do sidewalks receive the same priority as streets?**

A. NO. Roads are always plowed first. Only certain sidewalks are plowed when the storm has ended.

### **Q. Why is snow pushed into my driveway?**

A. The situation is unavoidable. The plows remove the snow from curb to curb for maximum clearance of the roadway. This provides maximum drainage and public safety.

### **Q. Why does the Town return to plow streets days after a storm when the pavement is already bare?**

A. After a large snowfall, once the roads are clear and our crews are rested, we return to "push back" the snowbanks. This does two things. First, it gives us a place to put snow in case of another major snowfall so that roads can remain open and safe. Second, it clears catch basins to allow melting snow or rainfall to move off the roadway to prevent freezing or flooding. Snow pushed into driveways during these operations will be removed if we have the time and resources to do it, however the DPW is not obligated to perform this added service.

### **Q. Will trash and recyclables be collected during a snowstorm?**

A. Normally, YES. If delayed, a notice will be posted on the Town of Medway website at [medwayma.gov](http://medwayma.gov). Trash should be placed so it does not hinder the street plows or sidewalk plows. Remember, these items will most likely get covered by snow and will not be visible to snow removal operators. **Keep all bags and carts on your property or at the curb of the sidewalk.**

### **Q. Who determines the opening, closing or delayed opening of school during snow and ice storms?**

A. The School Department.