

# **TOWN OF RIVER FALLS**

## **WINTER ROAD MAINTENANCE POLICY**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The Town of River Falls roads are subject to freezing rain, ice, snow, and snow drifting at any time during the 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 the Town's 60.02 miles of roads during and following snow and ice storms lies with the Town's two road maintenance employees under the direction of the Town Chairperson and Supervisors.

The following policy and plan of operation for winter road maintenance has been adopted by the Town Board.

## **SNOW AND ICE CONTROL**

The Town is responsible for maintenance of 60.02 miles of roads. Approximately 30 miles are classified into first priority plowing and sanding roads. The balance of the roads will be plowed and sanded as time allows.

According to State Statute §81.15 the Town has three (3) weeks to remove natural snow and ice accumulation. The Town's goal is to maintain the roads in as good winter driving conditions as weather, equipment, and budgets allows.

Planning and preparing for snow and ice operations 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 operations must be flexible enough to combat the unique aspect of each storm.

The amount of snow accumulation and the 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 storm will also affect conditions. Snow falling on warm pavement will clear off more easily. However, a moderate storm, coupled with a prolonged sub-freezing period will greatly increase the removal effort. Light, dry snows handle more easily than heavy wet snow.

Town personnel utilize area radio stations, TV, Pierce County Highway Department and State DOT forecasts to the extent they are available.

During snow and ice storms town road crews will respond to emergency conditions to the extent practicable. Road maintenance employees will respond to emergency requests such as fire calls, ambulance, or accidents at the direction of the Town Chairperson or designee. The Town road crews will not plow or sand on private property without authorization from the Town Chairperson. The Town will not take any responsibility for the removal of snow that is plowed

into private driveways from the road clearing operation. Driveway maintenance is the property owner's responsibility.

It can be expected that road maintenance services during off hours will be minimal and only provided when extreme storm conditions arise. Motorists should expect reduced highway mobility (traveling less than posted speed limits) during the winter storm.

## **SNOW REMOVAL FROM ROADS**

Planning for a snow removal operation begins when any snow is expected to accumulate. Each employee has priority roads to plow. The Town Chairperson will be aware of this plan and will review it periodically with road employees.

## **ICE REMOVAL**

The Town uses treatment with less than 5% salt. Sand is applied only at curves, intersections, hills and steep grade hills. Certain weather conditions may allow additional small amounts of salt in the sand to promote a thawing or clearing of compacted snow or ice.

## **SNOW PLOWING AND ICE PRIORITY ROADS**

Priority roads are classified as follows:

Number 1: Major and minor collector roads (State of Wisconsin - by function).

Number 2: All daily traveled school bus routes.

Number 3: All daily traveled milk routes.

All other roads will be plowed as soon as equipment is available or in the immediate area with available time.

In order to provide efficient operation, it may be necessary to partially complete a minor road to reach a major road of higher priority.

## **SNOW PLOWING AGREEMENTS**

Agreements have been signed with the City of River Falls and the Towns of Clifton, Kinnickinnic, and Martell, on exchange plowing of roads. The following is a list of the municipalities and the roads they have agreed to plow and sand:

City of River Falls-----950<sup>th</sup> St. from Cemetery Road to the dead end  
Town of River Falls-----All of 975<sup>th</sup> St. from Cemetery Road to the dead end  
Town of Clifton-----860<sup>th</sup> Ave. to the dead end at W10314 860<sup>th</sup> Ave.  
Town of River Falls-----690<sup>th</sup> Ave. to the intersection of 1070<sup>th</sup> St. in Clifton.  
Town of Martell-----870<sup>th</sup> Ave. to County Rd. W.  
Town of Martell-----810<sup>th</sup> Ave. from W7251 810<sup>th</sup> Ave. to N8018 747<sup>th</sup> St.  
Town of River Falls-----730<sup>th</sup> St. from 770<sup>th</sup> Ave. to the dead end  
Town of River Falls-----850<sup>th</sup> St. to County Rd. M in Kinnickinnic.  
Town of Kinnickinnic-----790<sup>th</sup> St. to State Rd. 29

The Town of River Falls will also have an agreement on filing for substitute trucks and drivers in the event of equipment breakdown.

## **CIRCUMSTANCES OR EXCEPTIONS OF 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 on gravel surface roads, due to the lack of frost to support the snow plows. Plowing gravel off the road creates a hazard as well as being very expensive to the taxpayer.
- Operations may be suspended or reduced due to equipment breakdowns.

The Town Chairperson has the authority to suspend snow and ice control operations. This may be done in severe storm conditions when there is danger to operators, or it is not practical or cost effective to continue.

## **SNOW SEASON PARKING**

No person shall park or leave any motor vehicle standing on any street, road or highway right-of-way in the Town from November 1<sup>st</sup> of any year through May 15<sup>th</sup> of the following year, except by permit of the Town Board. Any vehicle found to be in violation of this section may be towed by the Town at the owner's expense.

## **SNOW REMOVAL FROM DRIVEWAYS**

Things you should consider about your snow removal from your driveway:

-While standing in your driveway, facing the road, shovel all your snow to your right at your driveway entrance, thus the snowplow will take the snow down the road.

-If possible, don't plow your driveway until the snowplow has gone by.

State Statute 941.03 and the Town of River Falls General Code prohibit plowing any snow from driveways onto town roads. You are liable for fines and damages. If you hire someone to plow your driveway, be sure they know about this policy.

According to State Statute 86.105, the Town of River Falls may plow private driveways in an emergency situation. This will be done with the approval of the Town Chairperson or board designee.

The Town reserves the right to deny the request if the conditions are hazardous and/or present unnecessary risks to Town employees or equipment. Some private driveways, because of steep and narrow construction, are not built to accommodate the Town's heavy plowing equipment. These driveways could put the equipment at risk of damage. Our first concern is the safety of town employees as they maintain our public roads. The Town will only plow and sand driveways which have a grade of 10% or less.

Fees for plowing driveways shall be consistent with the established hourly rates for labor and equipment based on the current town fee schedule. Sand/salt is an additional minimum fee and varies based on length of driveway and volume applied. In the event that Town equipment becomes stuck due to poor conditions, towing service fees, and down time for Town equipment and labor, will be charged to the landowner.

## **MAILBOXES**

Mailboxes are the only structure that private owners are allowed to install within the right-of-way without a permit as a matter of convenience to the landowners. Neither the Town of River Falls nor the U.S. Postal Service issues written permits for the placement of mailboxes within the public right-of-way. The mailbox installation and support along with the on-going maintenance and conformity with current U.S. Postal Service standards are the responsibility of the property

owner. All mailboxes placed within the public right-of-way are owned by the property owner and are placed there at the owner's risk.

Operators are instructed to be very cautious near mailboxes. In most cases a properly installed mailbox will permit a snowplow to clear snow around it. Most cases of damaged mailboxes are caused by heavy snow hitting the box, which is not reimbursable. The mailboxes are not usually hit by the plow. A mailbox with alleged damage from a direct hit by a town snowplow must be reported immediately and will be visually inspected by one member of the town board and one road employee. The Town will repair or pay up to \$50 to replace the box and post. The Town assumes no other liability for mailbox damage or losses.

## **EMPLOYEES**

When a major snow storm occurs, the Town Chairperson may at his/her discretion, hire one or more part-time persons to assist the two full time employees in operating Town equipment. The Town Chairperson may at his/her discretion hire one or more persons to operate town equipment if a full-time employee is unavailable. Agreements with substitute drivers will be on file and updated annually.

## **WHERE TO CALL FOR INFORMATION AND COMPLAINTS**

Information about road conditions and operations can be obtained by calling the Town Chairperson. After hours, call the Town Chairperson for more information.

Complaints should be directed to the Town Chairperson. These will be investigated and discussed with the Town Board. Final action on complaints rests with the Board.

The Town Board, employees, spouses and family members will not respond to rude or belligerent complainants.