

SNOW REMOVAL POLICY
Town of Thomson
Township Roads Only

Adopted December 18, 2014

PURPOSE

Thomson Township believes that it is in the best interest of the citizens to assume basic responsibility for control of snow and ice on Township roads and streets. Reasonable snow and ice control is necessary for routine travel and emergency service. The Township will provide such control in a safe and cost effective manner.

PERSONNEL

All Road Crew Personnel shall know snow and ice control operations. The Road Foreman also utilizes on-call personnel to assist with snow removal operations.

PROCEDURES

1) Alert and Call Out

During normal working hours, after hours, on weekends, and during holidays, the Road Foreman and Township Board Liaison shall be responsible for monitoring street and weather conditions and initiation of snow plowing procedures.

Snow removal and/or sanding operations shall begin when snow accumulation reaches three (3) inches or when ice occurs and shall continue periodically throughout the duration of the storm. It is the intention of the Township to, if possible, keep these routes open to traffic during the snow event. However, snow and ice control operations will be conducted only when weather conditions do not endanger the safety of employees and equipment, and when operations are effective. Factors that may delay snow and ice control operations include: Severe cold, significant winds, limited visibility and rapid accumulation of snow and/or ice. It is not the intent of the Township to keep these routes completely snow or ice free during a snow event.

The Road Foreman shall decide when and where to begin snow/ice control operations based on the following:

Snow accumulation of three (3) inches or more on the driving surface of Township Roads, subject to Section 6 of this policy.

- a) Drifting of snow that impedes travel;
- b) Icy conditions which seriously affect travel;
- c) Time of snowfall in relationship to heavy use of roadways;
- d) For snow accumulations of less than three (3) inches, roadways may be sanded or plowed on an "as needed" basis as determined by the Road Foreman, subject to Section 6 of this policy.

In times of extreme snowfall, (greater than 1 inch per hour or blowing or drifting snow), roadways will not immediately be able to be completely or continuously cleared of snow.

Generally, operations shall continue until all roads are passable with the plowing of all townships roads after a snowfall event taking upwards of ten (10) or more hours. Widening and clean-up operations may continue immediately or on following work days depending on conditions and circumstances.

Safety of the plow operators and the public are important. Snow plowing operations may be suspended or terminated to allow personnel an adequate time for rest. Any decision to suspend operations shall be made by the Road Foreman and shall be based on conditions of the snowfall event. The Township will always endeavor to provide access for emergency services (ambulance, fire, police and medical) during a major snow or ice storm event.

Priority ranking during a major snow or ice storm event may be interrupted in order to respond to emergency requests for assistance or at the direction of the Road Foreman

2) Snowplowing and De-Icing priorities shall be as follows:

First Priority:

Fire Hall, Town Hall, Business Park

Second Priority:

Blacktopped Arterial and Collector Streets

Third Priority:

Gravel Roads

Fourth Priority:

Cul-de-sacs and small dead-end roads.

Fifth Priority:

Private driveways/roadways will be attended to following complete clearing of all Township roadways. No overtime shall be used. Fees will be charged in accordance to the hourly rate applicable at the time of request.

It is not the intent of the Township to be the primary resource for snow removal/ice control on private driveways/roadways. As per Minnesota Statute 160.21, townships may plow/sand private driveways/roadways if the property owner reimburses the township for the actual costs of performing the service. The Township cannot spend unreimbursed public funds on the winter maintenance of private driveways/roadways and is not required to provide a private property snow/ice removal service. Residents are encouraged to utilize private snowplow operators for snow removal.

3) Use of sand, salt, and other chemicals

The Township will use sand, salt, and other chemicals when there are accumulations or coatings of hazardous ice or slippery driving conditions. The Township is aware of concerns about the effect of such chemicals on the environment and will endeavor to limit their use.

4) Sanding and Salting

It shall be the policy of the Township to consider cost, environmental impact of salt usage, as well as public safety when establishing application rates and locations. Blanket sanding of general snow pack on residential streets will not be done. Sand and salt shall be applied to the roadways surface in such quantities so as to provide a level of skid resistance that is generally consistent with standards normally experienced on roadways in the State of Minnesota during the snow and ice season. Not all equipment used in snow removal is capable of use in sanding operations. It is recognized that a bare pavement policy is not possible at all times during winter periods in Northern Minnesota.

Roadways shall be spot sanded to provide skid resistance and traction consistent with area standards in accordance with the following priorities:

Hills, controlled intersections, bridges and curves.

When practical, sanding will be accomplished concurrent with plowing operations. However, in those cases or when conditions warrant, the first priority shall be snow removal, with sanding occurring as appropriate equipment becomes available.

Sand and salt mixtures are spread over ice or slippery areas to provide an abrasive mixture to melt the ice. Sanding is generally done the time of initial plowing operations or whenever ice or slippery conditions develop. Salt and sand will be applied to intersections, curves and hills. The Town of Thomson does not have a dry pavement policy, so drivers will always have to be careful during the winter season.

For safety reasons, it is necessary to plow streets from curb to curb so that all snow is cleared from the streets to provide safe traffic flow. It is not the intent of the plow drivers to fill resident's driveways or sidewalks with snow, however, this is the only place the snow can go so the roadways can be kept clear of snow. Plow drivers make efforts to minimize the amount of snow deposited in driveways, but the amount can still be significant.

Depending upon the volume of snow, snow storage within the Township rights-of-way and easements can become significant, especially in cul-de-sac areas. The Township does not provide snow removal from these areas. The Road Crew shall remove snow from intersections where plowed snow has created an unsafe passage for vehicular and pedestrian traffic. All other snow removal from rights-of-way and easements will be at the discretion of the Road Foreman

The Township is not responsible for tipped, spilled or damaged trash and recyclable containers within the road right-of-way.

Vegetation and turf situated within rights of way is always subject to damage. Structures and improvements are prohibited within rights of way and no liability is assumed for damage to same.

During snow and ice control operations, questions will be received by the Town of Thomson Office staff, available during normal office hours. The Road Foreman and Township Board Liaison shall keep the Town Office staff informed and updated regarding snow and ice removal operations. (e.g. schedules and breakdowns).

5) Work schedule for snowplow operators

When snow accumulation starts during daylight hours, Priority Snow Plow Routes will be plowed during regular working hours from 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.. Plowing will resume the next day at 4:00 a.m. if previous day snow/ice removal is unfinished. When snow accumulation begins after 4:00 p.m. snowplowing operations will start at 4:00 a.m. the next day. If three (3) inches or less of snow falls on a weekend or a holiday and is not considered a threat to public safety, streets and roadways will be plowed and sanded the next normal work day, at which time the normal plowing procedure will take place.

6) Weather conditions

Snow and ice control operations will be conducted only when weather conditions do not endanger the safety of Township employees and equipment. Factors that may delay snow and ice control operations include:

Severe cold, sustained high winds, and limited visibility.

Gravel roads with 4 inches or less of snow accumulation will not be plowed during minimal frost conditions as normally experienced in early spring or late fall.

7) Other Streets and Roads

State of Minnesota - Dept. of Transportation is responsible for sanding and plowing:
Interstate Highway 35

County Roads (within Thomson Township) - Carlton County Hwy Dept. is responsible for sanding and plowing:

County Highway 61, Canosia Road, Thomson Road, West Stark Road,
West St. Louis River Road, Crosby Road, Jay Cook Road,
Erickson Road (between Highway 61 and North Cloquet Road)
North Cloquet Road (both east and west), County Highway 210, service lanes
along County Highway 61.

St. Louis County Hwy Dept. is responsible for sanding and plowing:
East St. Louis River Road and Solway Road off of St. Louis River Road.

8) School Bus Routes

Almost every road in the Township is part of a bus route. There is no priority bus route. It is the intention of the Township to have the roads open so the bus drivers can safely transport students to and from school.

If inclement weather persists and makes the roads unsafe for student transport, the School Transportation Director will be in contact with the Road Foreman to determine if school needs to be canceled or delayed. The Transportation Director will be in contact with the School Superintendent.