

TOWN OF WESTWOOD  
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

**PUBLIC SNOW REMOVAL POLICY**

**Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to provide information on the procedures followed by the Department of Public Works during any snow or ice event throughout the winter season. The Department of Public Works reserves the right to modify any plan as needed to adjust to various circumstances that a storm might present.

The Director of Public Works and the Highway Superintendent will be responsible for carrying out this policy and distributing copies to each employee and posting it on the Town of Westwood website.

**Procedures**

During normal working hours, prior to a predicted storm, the Director and the Highway Superintendent will be responsible for determining when snow removal operations will commence. If a storm is predicted to arrive after the normal working day a scheduled start time should be implemented.

After normal work hours the Police Department will notify the on-call staff who will proceed from his location within 30 minutes to check road conditions and take necessary action. The following conditions are possible considerations that are made by the on-call staff member.

1. If the problem appears to be only a few isolated slippery spots the on-call staff will treat those areas with a sander unit.
2. If the problem appears to intensify it will be the on-call staff's responsibility to contact the Highway Superintendent and inform him of the current situation. It is at this point where the decision to call in for additional help will be made. It is important to note that when our vehicles are treating the roads we use a combination of salt/sand and at times, when the temperature drops below a certain level, magnesium chloride applications.
3. Snow plowing will begin when 2 inches of snow has accumulated and/or the future forecast is indicative of more accumulation ahead of us. Snow plowing operations will continue throughout the storm with a combination of town vehicles/staff and local contractors hired by the town.

4. Salting applications are suspended during our plowing operations until the storm has ceased and routes have been 100% cleaned up. Roads will only be treated during plowing operations if absolutely necessary.
5. If an emergency exists during plowing operations (Police or Fire), the Senior Foreman, Foreman, or Highway Superintendent will dispatch the closest vehicle to that location to ensure the emergency vehicle access is not impeded.
6. The sidewalk plows will be dispersed as soon as the storm has subsided and main roads have been cleared. These routes are to all public schools, town center, and University Ave.
7. Once the storm has subsided and plow routes have been cleaned up then each route will be treated with an application of salt.
8. Once the storm is over cleanup and pushback can continue into the following day or two. This might result in some additional cleanup of spillage into driveways and sidewalks that will become the homeowner's responsibility to tend too.

During the course of the storm, especially overnight, the Highway Superintendent will discuss the status of snow removal and the expectation for additional accumulation with the School Superintendent so he has factual information to decide if he should declare a snow day or a delayed arrival time.

### Priorities

1. The DPW's first priority is to ensure that police, fire and medical emergency equipment can move safely on Town streets.
2. The DPW's second priority is to open main and secondary roads for use by the public.
3. The DPW's third priority is to open residential streets.
4. The DPW's fourth priority is to open all schools, public facilities, and clear sidewalks used to walk to schools/businesses/public transportation

### Why Some Roads are Cleared Before Others

As snow begins to accumulate, the Town of Westwood concentrates on primary main roads (Route 109, Summer Street, Pond Street, Nahatan Street, Oak Street, Clapboardtree Street, Washington Street, Hartford Street, East Street, Pond Street, Canton Street, University Ave, and Gay Street. ). These roads are focused on first because of their significance (i.e. hospital routes). As snow continues to

accumulate, the Towns first priority is to keep the main roads open and passable. As soon as all main streets within the town are clear, equipment is immediately moved to the residential areas.

It is important to note that every employee of the Town of Westwood is assigned routes with vehicles that are allocated to handle those specific routes. At times it might appear that some vehicles are at locations that don't exactly match the priority list previously mentioned. The priority list works hand in hand with operator and appropriate equipment availability.

### **Liabilities/Restrictions**

The Town is not responsible for damage to private property (cars, mailboxes, hockey nets, etc.) or private improvements (grassy areas, irrigation systems, fences, shrubs, steps, etc.) that fall within the public street layout. The public street layout is generally 40' wide but can be as much as 60' wide which usually extends beyond the pavement.

The Towns primary responsibility is to clear each travel route as soon as possible. Although we do our best to serve our residents, at times, snow removal might not coincide with snow clearing that has been done by residents. It is the responsibility of each property owner to maintain their driveways and sidewalks that are not on the town sidewalk routes described earlier.

The Town will maintain and tend to brush, limbs, or trees that fall and lie ONLY in the public way. Private brush, branches, or trees that fall and lie outside of the public way that fall during storms are the responsibility of that property owner.

It shall be unlawful for the owner or operator of any vehicle, other than one acting in an emergency, to park said vehicle on any public street or place where the traveling public has the right of access between the hours of 2:00 a.m. and 5:00 a.m. of any day during the period of December 1 through March 31.

In order to facilitate safe and orderly snow clearing operations, the Emergency Management Director may declare a snow or ice emergency based on existing or expected weather conditions. During such an emergency all parking on Town roads is prohibited. Vehicles parked on Town roadways in violation of the ban may be ticketed and/or towed at the owner's expense. When possible, advance notice will be sent out through various media electronic means, including posting it on the Town's website: [www.town.westwood.ma.us](http://www.town.westwood.ma.us).

It is important to note that Chapter 355/5 of the Town Bylaws states: "No person shall lay, throw, place or cause to be placed any snow or ice on any paved Town street or sidewalk so as to create a hazardous condition or public safety concern. If, after having received notice from a duly authorized agent of the Town that such a condition exists, the owner of the property from which the snow or ice was removed (or his agent having

charge thereof) fails to correct the condition within a reasonable amount of time, the owner or agent shall be deemed to be in violation of this bylaw. Violation of this section shall be punished by a fine of \$300 or any cost incurred by the Town as a result of said violation or both.”

*The Town of Westwood requests that residents please be patient during snow operations. Snow removal is a difficult and time consuming task. Please try to limit road travel during and immediately following a snowfall unless absolutely necessary. The less traffic on the roads during snow clearing operations, the more effective the job can be performed.*