



# *THE CITY OF WYOMING'S SNOW AND ICE MANAGEMENT POLICY*

## **A. Introduction**

It is among the responsibilities of the City of Wyoming to manage snow and ice on City streets and public property under the City's jurisdiction. The purpose of this document is to set policies for how the City will fulfill this responsibility and to identify those City officials and employees who are authorized to set subordinate policies and make judgments in the course of carrying out snow and ice management activities.

Setting policies for snow and ice management involves evaluating and weighing a number of considerations, including the following:

1. Public safety. The safety of those traveling by motor vehicle, on foot and by other modes of transportation is of high priority. The goal of the City is to provide for surface conditions that are safe for travel in consideration of surrounding conditions and circumstances. Also, vehicles and personnel engaged in snow and ice management activity can increase risk to the public by virtue of their presence on public ways during times when travel conditions and vision are impaired.
2. Personnel safety. City personnel incur risk by their presence on public ways while managing snow and ice. The safety of City personnel as well is of the utmost importance.
3. Cost. City funds are limited and taxpayers require that they be spent cost-effectively. It is not possible to address all snow and ice issues simultaneously and completely. It is not practical to maintain equipment and personnel availability at a level that is sufficient for all circumstances.
4. Environment. Materials to maintain or improve surface traction contribute pollutants such as sand and chlorides to surface waters and to City stormwater basins and other facilities, which in turn can increase the cost of maintaining those facilities. It is important not to use an excess of these materials. Chloride harms fish and other freshwater aquatic life and also negatively affects infrastructure, vehicles, plants, soil, pets, and wildlife, as well as impairs groundwater and drinking water supplies. Once in the water, chloride becomes a permanent pollutant and continues to accumulate in the environment over time. The data show that salt concentrations are increasing impairments to both surface waters and groundwater across the state.
5. Priority setting to optimize outcomes. Because consideration must be given to all factors, it is necessary to set priorities for snow and ice management activities. Considerations include, though are not limited to, maintenance area classification and vehicle use level, need for emergency vehicle access, areas of known safety risk, reported conditions, costs, and impact on the environment.

6. Management/professional/technical judgment. Policies and practices rest on management, professional, and technical knowledge, on prevailing weather and travel conditions and on other circumstances that operators encounter. As to important policy elements, the Council cannot state a policy but instead must delegate the authority to establish and adjust the policy to the professional judgment of appropriate City personnel.
  
7. Need for adaptability. Particularly with respect to effectiveness, cost and environmental consequences, snow and ice management is a realm of innovation. It is important that City policy allow for personnel to maintain awareness of developments and allow for practices to be adjusted as appropriate. The public must practice due care given the continuously changing hazards presented by natural snow and ice concerns.

The policies stated in this document, as well as any delegations of authority to set subordinate policies, rest on an assessment and balancing of these considerations. It is not possible or practicable for snow and ice to be fully removed from all surfaces or prevented from accumulating on surfaces. The City encourages and expects that City residents and other members of the traveling public will at all times conduct their activities mindful of conditions, hazards, and what is necessary to remain safe.

**B. Snow and Ice Management Priorities**

The City differentiates among maintenance areas based on a variety of factors, including traffic volume and location (e.g., business district). The established City priority is as follows:

<b>Classification</b>	<b>Target Regain Time</b>	<b>Lane Description</b>
Arterials Central Business District	0-3 hours	The goal of the jurisdiction is to achieve driving lanes that are as free of snow and ice as reasonably possible in a northern climate. Drivers should take due care when driving on snow and ice surfaces, including reducing their speed. Jurisdictions will log the date and time when a satisfactory road condition is obtained.
Remaining streets, including cul-de-sacs and hammer heads	4-12 hours	
Parking lots, sidewalks, trails, and other surfaces for non-motorized travel	4-48 hours	
Sidewalks	12-24	

However, the City will also consider localized safety concerns, reported hazard conditions and other relevant information in adjusting priorities. The Public Works Superintendent, or delegated authority has discretion to direct the resources contained in this Policy, and those directives set by the Public Works Superintendent or delegated authority.

Public Works Superintendent or delegated authority directs resources and adjusts priorities during an event with due attention to the considerations listed in Section A, above. Within the policies and directives set by the Public Works Superintendent or delegated authority, operations personnel may adjust their activity as well to address safety concerns, improve effectiveness, reduce costs, and limit environmental impacts. Section A, paragraph 1, is a significant operational consideration for Cities when making such adjustments.

The City is not responsible for managing snow and ice on streets, sidewalks, or other areas not within City

jurisdiction.

### **C. Training**

It is important that personnel involved in snow and ice management receive appropriate training to inform their operational capacities and the judgment that they must exercise in performing their responsibilities. The Public Works Superintendent is delegated the authority to determine and provide for appropriate training and tasked to inform the Council of training funding needs during budgeting. The City Administrator will consider training for police, emergency response and other City personnel who may not have specific responsibilities for snow and ice management but whose awareness and coordination is important to the City's efforts.

The City will document, or require documentation of, all training that it requires or conducts.

### **D. Delegations of Authority**

Authority with respect to snow and ice management decisions is delegated as follows:

1. Public Works Superintendent or delegated authority. The Public Works Superintendent or delegated authority will exercise general oversight of snow and ice management activities and will make recommendations to the Council on staffing, purchases and funding as a part of annual budgeting. The Public Works Superintendent or delegated authority will exercise responsibility with respect to personnel training as indicated in Section C, above.  
The Public Works Superintendent or delegated authority will establish procedures for reports on snow and ice conditions from City personnel or the public to be documented and routed to appropriate City personnel so that such reports inform snow and ice management activities. Operators will consider how best to respond snow and ice management complaints, pursuant to the following City policy:

### **E. Questions and Complaints**

Complaints regarding snow and ice control or damage shall be taken during normal working hours and handled in accordance with the City's normal complaint procedure. High priority complaints (those involving access to property or problems requiring immediate attention) shall be handled on a priority basis. During normal working hours, response time should not exceed twenty-four (24) hours for any complaint. It should be understood that complaint responses are to ensure that the provisions of this policy have been fulfilled and that all residents of the City have been treated uniformly. It is the intention to log all complaints and upgrade this policy as necessary in consideration of the constraints of our resources.

1. Public Works Superintendent or delegated authority. The Public Works Superintendent or delegated authority is authorized to establish subordinate policies and directives with respect to the following:
  - a. Adjustments to snow and ice management priorities as indicated in Section B, above.
  - b. Protocols and directives concerning the initiation and cessation of snow and ice management activities. Cessation protocols and directives will consider conditions that endanger employee or equipment safety, or that cause management activities to be ineffective.
  - c. Protocols and practices for snow plowing and other operations, including snow storage. In determining snow storage locations and conditions, the Public Works Superintendent or delegated authority will consider the debris and pollutant load held within stored snow and the potential water pollution impact of snowmelt within surface runoff.

- d. Protocols for application of sand, salt and other means to preserve/reestablish traction. The Public Works Superintendent or delegated authority will give particular consideration to safety, environmental, and cost concerns, will maintain City awareness of best practices and innovations, and in his or her judgment will adjust protocols in accordance with such practices and innovations.

In making the judgments underlying these actions, the Public Works Superintendent or delegated authority will give due attention to the considerations listed in Section A, above. The Public Works Superintendent or delegated authority should consider providing for awareness of best practices, including those contained in the Winter Parking Lot and Sidewalk Maintenance Manual (MPCA, 2015) and the Minnesota Snow and Ice Control Field Handbook for Snowplow Operators (Minnesota Local Road Research Board, 2012), as they may be updated, and to provide for incorporation of best practices as appropriate.

Until such time as applicable policies and directives are established, the Public Works Superintendent or delegated authority will direct operations in his or her best judgment and with attention to the considerations listed in Section A, above.

2. Operators. City personnel engaged in snow and ice management operations are authorized to adjust activities in accordance with Section B, above. Such personnel, in their judgment, also may adjust plowing and other operational methods and may implement hazard warnings, consistent with the policies and directives set by the Public Works Superintendent or delegated authority. Operators are to use professional judgment and discretion to determine the best course of action to complete snow and ice management responsibilities under the circumstances, considering public and driver safety.

## **F. Operational Framework**

1. The City and its operators will document control practices and decisions and keep written or printed records of application and other decisions in carrying out this Policy. A storm record will be completed by the City for each storm event and should include operating times, weather conditions, material used, and personnel and equipment resources committed.
2. Emergency Situations. The City will dispatch operators and equipment as soon as possible to the routes required by emergency vehicles—fire, medical, police—responding to an emergency situation within the jurisdiction of the City, Fire Department, or Police Department.

The City will plow private property only if emergency vehicles require access.

3. Damage to Personal Property. The City will consider for repair or replacement at City expense property that is (1) properly installed, (2) permitted by City ordinance to be located adjacent to the street, and (3) damaged by contact with city equipment. The City will not repair or replace damaged trees, shrubs, or landscaping.
4. Deviation from Policy. If a person with delegated authority determines deviation from this Policy to be in the best interest of the City, or that a change is needed, the deviation will be documented. Documentation includes identifying: the cause, why the response was necessary, and how long the deviation will be in effect.

The City will coordinate with neighboring or regional jurisdictions as warranted to realize better management outcomes, cost savings or environmental benefits.

**No Rights Created**

This policy is for internal use only in order to specify the policies and distribution of authority for snow and ice management. The policy is for the benefit of serving the general public and not for the benefit of any individual or specific group of individuals. It is not intended to and does not create any right or expectation in any third party. The City Council may amend this policy or make exceptions to it as it deems appropriate.

**Disclaimer**

The City will begin snow and ice management as soon as reasonably possible. Cold, wind, visibility, equipment failure or disability, rapid snow and ice accumulation, and/or other unforeseen conditions or emergencies may prevent safe or effective management and cause delays in management operations.

**Distribution**

This policy will be made available to the public upon request and will be posted on the City of Wyoming's official website.