

Snow and Ice Control Policy

Mahnomen County Highway Department

SNOWPLOWING:

The County's Snowplowing operation has the function of plowing accumulated snowfall off County State Aid Highways and County Roads to provide clear, safe right-of-ways and functional traffic flow. The plowing responsibilities are divided between County forces and private contractors. Although routes vary in length, each County piece of equipment has about 45 miles of road to maintain. At the present, the County operates three (3) truck routes - the balance of routes are assigned to private contractors, who maintain these roads within their contracted areas. Contracted routes are primarily gravel roads. *The Department has only enough personnel to operate one shift daily.*

SNOW REMOVAL POLICY:

(1) The County will **not** usually dispatch snowplows until the snowfall has stopped and on snowfalls under two (2) inches. Exceptions may be made during extended snowfalls or if drifting becomes a problem. In any case, plows will not be sent out if conditions are considered too hazardous.

(2) After the snow storm subsides, all Bituminous County Roadways have highest priority, with gravel secondary County Roadways next.

(3) Early morning snowplowing typically begins around 5:00 a.m. to accommodate the traveling public.

(4) The Department shall endeavor to have all County Roadways open to traffic within 24 hours after the snow storm subsides, depending on conditions.

(5) The County Engineer and/or Assistant Engineer shall make decisions on calling plows and crew in because of visibility, safety to employees and equipment, and to schedule different starting times during the week and weekends in the best interest of Mahnomen County.

(7) The Department is available to assist in an emergency on public or private roads as directed by the County Engineer/Assistant Engineer and County Sheriff/Lieutenant Deputy.

SALT AND SANDING POLICY AND ICE CONTROL:

(1) The County does **not** have a bare pavement policy and does **not** sand entire sections of roadway.

(2) Sanding is done with a mixture of sand and 10-15 percent of sodium chloride only.

(3) Sanding is limited to intersections, curves, hills and bridges to provide skid resistance in compliance with Minnesota Statute 160.215.

(4) Sanding of straight road sections will only be performed in extreme conditions, as directed by the County Engineer or Assistant Engineer.

(5) Sanding is performed on bituminous County Roadways only, gravel County Roads will not be sanded due to the damage done by salt-sand to the road surface in the spring.

DRIVEWAY PLOWING:

County residents are reminded that it is unlawful to plow snow from driveways, onto or across County Roads. Snow dumped, plowed, pushed, blown, or shoveled onto a roadway can create a serious hazard not only for motorists, but also for snowplow drivers and equipment. Snow piles along roadways also cause increased drifting. Accidents and damages caused by snow piles placed in the roadway may result in liability to the property owner.

MAILBOXES:

Winter is a very hard season for mailboxes. The County will repair at its expense only mailboxes that are properly located and installed, and which were damaged by actual contact with plow equipment. **Damage resulting from snow flying from the plow is not the responsibility of the County.** Information and sketches of proper mailbox placement and supports are available at the County Highway Department office, Mahnomen, MN.

STRANDED OR STUCK VEHICLES:

The County will assist motorists by contacting law enforcement/emergency personnel but **will not** attempt to remove stuck vehicles from ditches, snow banks or other impediment.

160.215 Snow removal; salt and chemicals restricted.

In order to:

- (1) minimize the harmful or corrosive effects of salt or other chemicals upon vehicles, roadways, and vegetation;
- (2) reduce the pollution of waters; and
- (3) reduce the driving hazards resulting from chemicals on windshields;

road authorities, including road authorities of cities, responsible for the maintenance of highways or streets during periods when snow and ice are prevalent, shall utilize such salt or other chemicals only at such places as upon hills, at intersections, or upon high-speed or arterial roadways where vehicle traction is particularly critical, and only if, in the opinion of the road authorities, removal of snow and ice or reduction of hazardous conditions by blading, plowing, sanding, including chemicals needed for free flow of sand, or natural elements cannot be accomplished within a reasonable time.