



Okanogan County

Dept. of Public Works

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Snow and Ice Control Policy

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Purpose:

The following policy has been established to provide information to the public and establish guidelines for Public Works staff to follow in order to ensure consistent practices for snow and ice removal during and after a winter storm event.

General:

The goal of Okanogan County Public Works is to provide safe and efficient winter travel within the constraints of the County's budgetary resources. However, the County does not assure a completely bare road.

Action Plan:

Snow and ice situations will be handled during normal working hours, after the storm has passed, winds have subsided, or unless conditions warrant otherwise. Area supervisors are responsible for evaluating road conditions and for the call-out and the utilizing of crews under the following guidelines:

- 4 inch minimum
- Extreme ice conditions
- Work with law enforcement on accidents

Any other overtime for snow and ice control on secondary or primitive roads will be authorized by the County Engineer or the Maintenance Manager after consulting with the Area Supervisors.

A snow plow route will be assigned to a piece of equipment, and the supervisor is responsible for implementing this route and making sure the driver is familiar with the route and how it is carried out in conjunction with the overall operation plan.

Equipment maintenance and repair will be monitored by the operators and supervisors so they will be ready as storm events occur. Any major repairs are to be performed at the main equipment shop or as determined by the maintenance shop supervisor.

Supervisors, Management and department personnel monitor weather and road conditions daily from various sources to modify the operation plan as needed providing for operation efficiency.

Snow and Ice Control Policy (continued)

Operations:

Generally the following priority will be used in snow and ice removal including the final clean up after the storm event. The priority of plow operations will be as follows but may change due to unforeseen circumstances.

Winter maintenance activities following an overnight storm occurring during the regular scheduled work week will normally commence at 6:00am. Should an evening or weekend storm occur, a partial crew may be mobilized, if conditions warrant, providing winter maintenance service on paved primary roads only. Service to all other roadways will be accomplished during normal workweek time periods.

FIRST DAY:

Major collectors – minor collectors

1. Arterials, local grades
2. School bus routes
3. Mail carrier routes

Access roads

1. Local access roads
2. Local gravel access roads nearby

SECOND DAY:

Access roads not covered first day

1. Gravel access roads
2. Unimproved roads (native surfaces)

THIRD DAY:

Access/unimproved roads that are on a winter maintenance schedule

1. Widen out roads plowed first and second day
2. React to citizen complaints
3. Additional plowing, sanding and de-icing of trouble spots
4. Snow parks (as time and resources permit)

Snow removal from roadways of other jurisdiction:

Okanogan County will not provide winter maintenance to roadways of other jurisdictions unless there is a life threatening situation, request from law enforcement agency, private citizen with a medical condition with a signed doctors statement, or another public agency with a signed work agreement between themselves and Okanogan County or at the direction of the Board of County Commissioners.

Personal Property Damage:

Mailboxes, fences or other items damaged during snow and ice removal are evaluated on a case by case basis. Only items that were damaged by actual contact with County Equipment may be repaired at the County's expense, provided they were located and installed properly.

Snow and Ice Control Policy (continued)

The County will not be liable for damages to fences, vehicles or other objects placed on County right of way.

Snow placement:

Snow will be removed from roadways and shoulders by the use of snow blowers, graders with wing plow and V-plow attachment, trucks with plows and loaders. The use of this type of equipment helps make room for further accumulation of snow during the course of the winter. The wing attachment is also used to push snow to the back slope or the ditch bottom to allow for drainage usually as spring conditions occur.

Plow operations in opposite lanes of travel:

Snow removal may sometimes require equipment to operate in the opposite lane of travel. These areas are usually marked with “snowplow maybe operating on either side of roadway” warning signs. It may also occur during times of drifting and blowing snow which warrants snow being taken in the direction the wind is blowing. Okanogan County may close various roads during extreme blowing and drifting conditions until the weather breaks and winds subside. Traffic control in these situations may be provided on an as needed basis, as determined by the immediate supervisor after conferring with plow operators.

Vehicles impeding snow removal:

Okanogan County will have vehicles towed at owner’s expense if they are hindering snow removal, causing a safety hazard to the travelling public, blocking school bus or snow plow turnarounds.

Ice control:

Sanding and de-icing are methods used to control ice during the course of the winter. Sand is typically applied to the grades, shaded areas, curves and intersections. De-icer is also applied to these areas but is more closely regulated by budgetary constraints. Okanogan County does not guarantee a bare road for winter travel.

Stranded vehicles:

Stranded vehicles may be removed by County personnel if it is at the request of law enforcement or determined to be a safety hazard; otherwise we can provide a call to Sheriff’s dispatch for arrangement with a tow company for removal of the vehicle.

Non Winter Maintenance Roads:

These roads are typically gravel roads, which because of limited resources and infrequent use receive no winter maintenance. These roads are marked with signage that states no winter maintenance beyond this point.

Driveways:

During plowing operations it is impossible to prevent plowed snow from entering driveways. Okanogan County acknowledges and regrets this inevitable consequence of our plowing operation but it would be impossible for us to complete our scheduled plow routes if we stopped to clean every driveway.