

CITY OF AURORA

SNOW PLOWING AND ICE CONTROL POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

The City of Aurora, Minnesota, finds that it is in the best interest of the residents of the city to assume basic responsibility for control of snow and ice on city streets. Reasonable ice and snow control is necessary for routine travel and emergency services. The city will attempt to provide such control in a safe and cost-effective manner, keeping in mind safety, budget, personnel, and environmental concerns. The city will use city employees, equipment and/or private contractors to provide this service. This policy does not relieve the operator of private vehicles, pedestrians, property owners, residents and all others that may be using public streets, of their responsibility to act in a reasonable, prudent and cautious manner, given the prevailing street conditions.

2. WHEN WILL CITY START SNOW OR ICE CONTROL OPERATIONS?

The Public Works Director will decide when to begin snow or ice control operations. The criteria for that decision are:

- A. Snow accumulation of two (2) inches or more;
- B. Drifting snow that causes problems for travel;
- C. Icy conditions which seriously affect travel;
- D. Time of snowfall in relationship to heavy use of streets; and
- E. East Range Police Department's recommendation of road conditions.

Snow and ice control operations are expensive and involve the use of limited personnel and equipment. Consequently, snowplowing operations (including sidewalks) will not generally be conducted for snowfall of less than two (2) inches.

3. HOW SNOW WILL BE PLOWED

Snow will be plowed in a manner so as to minimize traffic obstructions. The center of the roadway will be plowed first. The snow shall then be pushed from left to right on two-way streets. The discharge shall go onto the boulevard area of the street. In times of extreme snowfall, streets will not always immediately be able to be completely cleared of snow.

4. SNOW REMOVAL

The Public Works Director will determine if and when snow will be removed from the area by truck. Such snow removal will occur in areas where there is no room on the boulevard for snow storage and in areas where accumulated piles of snow create a hazardous condition. Snow removal operations will not commence until other

snowplowing operations have been completed. Snow removal operations may also be delayed depending on weather conditions, personnel and budget availability. The snow will be removed and hauled to a snow storage area. The snow storage area will be located so as to minimize environmental problems.

5. PRIORITIES AND SCHEDULE OF STREETS TO BE PLOWED

Priorities

The city has classified city streets based on the street function, traffic volume and importance to the welfare of the community. Those streets classified as “Emergency Snow Plow Routes” (Exhibit A) will be plowed first. These are high volume routes, which connect major sections of the city and provide access for emergency fire, police, and medical services. The second priority streets are those streets providing access to schools and commercial businesses. The third priority streets are low volume residential streets. The fourth priority areas are alleys and city parking lots.

Snow Emergencies

During significant and severe storms with snow accumulation of eight (8) inches or more, the city must be prepared to move personnel and equipment to maintain priority routes first. In fulfilling the need to have all priority streets safe and passable, when resources are limited, plowing of all other streets may be stopped at any time so resources can be shifted to priority routes. The list of the “Emergency Snow Plow Routes” and corresponding map (Exhibit B) is attached.

Unforeseeable circumstances may cause delays in completing assigned plow routes. Such circumstances may include weather conditions that endanger the safety of snowplow operators and/or safe and effective operation of equipment, commuter traffic, disabled vehicles, poor visibility conditions, parked cars along streets, assistance to emergency response vehicles, equipment breakdown, and personnel shortages.

6. WORK SCHEDULE FOR SNOWPLOW OPERATORS

Snowplow operators will be expected to work eight-hour shifts. In severe snow emergencies, operators sometimes have to work in excess of eight-hour shifts. Operators will take fifteen-minute break every two hours, with a half-hour meal break after four hours. After twelve-hour shift, the operators will be replaced if additional qualified personnel are available.

7. TRAFFIC REGULATIONS

The city recognizes that snowplow operators are exempt from traffic regulations set forth in Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 169 while actually engaged in work on streets, except for regulations related to driving while impaired and the safety of school children. Pursuant to this authority, snowplow operators engaged in snow removal or ice control on city streets have discretion to disregard traffic laws set forth in Chapter 169,

except for laws relating to impaired driving and school children safety, when in their judgment, it is safe to disregard such laws. The privileges granted herein to operators of snow removal and ice control vehicles shall apply only if the vehicle is equipped with one lighted lamp displaying a flashing, oscillating, or rotating amber light placed in such a position on the vehicle as to be visible throughout an arc of 360 degrees.

8. WEATHER CONDITIONS

Snow and ice control operations will be conducted only when weather conditions do not endanger the safety of snowplow operators and equipment. Factors that may delay snow and ice control operations include: severe cold, significant winds, and limited visibility.

9. USE OF SAND, SALT, AND OTHER CHEMICALS

The city will use sand, salt, and other chemicals when there are hazardous ice or slippery conditions. The city is concerned about the effect of such chemicals on the environment and will limit its use for that reason. The city will take the recommendation of the East Range Police Department in to consideration when determining to use sand, salt, and other chemicals.

10. SIDEWALKS

The city will maintain some of the sidewalks in the city as a courtesy to pedestrians. The list of those sidewalks is shown in Exhibit C. As there are a limited number of personnel available, the city will only maintain these sidewalks after the streets have been plowed. Generally, sidewalks will not be cleaned for snowfall of less than two (2) inches.

The removal of snow on sidewalks by the city staff as a courtesy does NOT exempt the property owner from responsibility for snow removal on the sidewalk under City Code Section 91.015 A and 90.18A. It is the responsibility of the resident and/or property owner to remove all accumulated snow from all other sidewalks along public streets adjoining their property. This includes any snow plowed from public streets onto the sidewalk.

If the City deems it necessary to remove snow placed by a private business or person on a City sidewalk that the City has plowed, the City Administrator shall recover said costs as provided through City Code Section 90.015 through Special Assessment or Court Proceedings.

11. MAILBOXES

Snow material coming into contact with a mailbox is a common obstacle snowplow operator face during storm activities. The responsibility to replace and repair damaged items shall be that of the homeowner unless the Public Works Director determines that the City was remiss. The City recommends residents abide by Minnesota Department of

Transportation Mailboxes Best Practices and Policies and United States Post Office Mailbox Guidelines (Exhibit D):

- Place your mailbox 6-8 inches back from the curb.
- Place the post for mailbox support a minimum of 3 feet from the curb or edge of the road shoulder.
- Position your mailbox 41-45 inches from the road surface to the bottom of the mailbox or point of mail entry.
- Installation that will pivot or rotate in some fashion when a snowplow hits the mailbox.

12. COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

A written complaint form is available at the City Clerk's Office and must be filled out in its entirety. Complaints requiring service will be transferred to a work request and forwarded to the appropriate supervisor for scheduling. Emergency complaints will be handled in an expeditious manner as resources are available. At no time should a citizen or property owner try to stop a moving vehicle, especially snow plowing equipment. This is a dangerous practice and can cause potential harm to all involved.

13. DEVIATION FROM POLICY

The Public Works Director may deviate from this policy when in his or her judgment it is in the best interest of the city or is necessary because of budget needs or other circumstances. Changes in priorities (lasting more than 4 hours) will be documented as to what caused such actions, why the change was necessary, and for how long the change is to be in effect. Those city employees and/or contractors affected will be notified immediately by radio or cell phone of such changes with all communications logged. Information logged will include the time and date of the communication, name of employee contacted, and how they were contacted. Any changes of priorities lasting more than 24 hours should be made in a written record and the public should be informed of such changes through normal methods used by the city for emergency notifications.

14. REVIEW AND MODIFICATION OF POLICY

The City Administrator shall keep on file all comments and complaints regarding this policy. The policy will be reviewed biannually. Any review will consider comments and complaints since the last review and any other factors affecting the policy or its implementation.

EXHIBIT A

EMERGENCY SNOWPLOW ROUTES

During a Snow Emergency where there is an accumulation of eight (8) inches of snow or more, only the following street will be plowed until the storm is over. Remaining streets will be plowed as reasonably as possible after emergency is over.

1. 3rd Avenue North from Highway 135 to 3rd Street East
2. Main Street from 6th Avenue North to Hwy 110
3. Erie Street from 3rd Avenue North to the West end of Holland Drive
4. Linda Drive from Holland Drive to Lane 55
5. Central Avenue from Erie Street to 2nd Street East
6. 4th Street West from 4th Avenue North to Central Avenue
7. East 4th Avenue North from 4th Street West to 3rd Street East
8. 2nd Street East from North 3rd Avenue to Central Avenue
9. 3rd Avenue South from Main Street to South 6th Street East
10. South 2nd Street East from 3rd Avenue South to 5th Avenue South
11. South 3rd Street East from 5th Avenue South to Hwy 110
12. 3rd Avenue South from Main Street to South 3rd Street West
13. South 3rd Street West from South 3rd Avenue to South 2nd Avenue West
14. South 2nd Avenue West from 3rd Street West to 1st Street West
15. 1st Street West from South 2nd Street West to West 3rd Avenue
16. 2nd Street West from 3rd Avenue South to 4th Avenue South

EXHIBIT C

SIDEWALKS PLOWED

As a courtesy to pedestrians, we will make every effort to assist with snow removal from sidewalks in the following areas:

1. Main Street from 4th Avenue to Central Avenue – Both Sides
2. 3rd Avenue North from Clinic to 1st Street East - Both Sides.
3. Main Street from Central Avenue to Hwy 110 – West Side Only
4. 2nd Avenue North from 1st Street West to First Street East - North Side Only
5. 1st Street North from 4th Avenue to 2nd Avenue – West Side Only
6. 2nd Street North from 4th Avenue to 2nd Avenue – East Side Only

EXHIBIT D

Mailbox Recommendations

