



SNOW AND ICE CONTROL POLICY

INTRODUCTION

The following policies and procedures serve as a practical guide for the efficient and cost-effective removal of snow and ice in the City of Sioux City.

The responsibility for providing snow and ice control on Sioux City's 500 miles of streets and alleys rests with the Field Services Division of the Public Works Department. Reasonable ice and snow control is necessary for routine travel and emergency services. The City will provide such control in a safe and cost effective manner, keeping in mind safety, budget, personnel, and equipment. Under City Code Section 10.84.020, the Mayor, Mayor Pro-Tem, the City Manager or his/her designee may declare a "Snow Emergency".

Snow and ice control is typically considered emergency work. The snow and ice control program may be initiated by: 1) the City Manager, 2) the Public Works Director, 3) the Field Services Street Superintendent or his/her designee. City streets must be cleared at any time of the day or night. The work must be accomplished as expeditiously as possible; and, consequently, all planning and equipment preparation should be completed prior to the arrival of the snow season. Preparing a snow and ice control program can be, and frequently is, made extremely difficult due to a combination of factors. Rate and accumulation of snowfall, moisture content, temperature, time of day or night, wind velocity, and duration are all factors that interact to create a unique aspect for each storm. No two storms are ever identical.

WEATHER FORECASTING

The key element in implementing an efficient snow and ice control program is weather forecasting. Weather forecasting is the trigger mechanism for any storm.

The Field Services Division closely monitors short and long range weather forecasts. These forecasts have greatly assisted in increasing the effectiveness of the snow and ice control program. Actual field conditions in the immediate area will assist in determining when to mobilize, what equipment to operate, and what materials to utilize.

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

This Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) contains statements of procedures and directives basic to the organization and operation for the chemical and abrasive program, snow and ice control program and snow plowing program.

The City Manager, the Public Works Director and Field Services Street Superintendent or his/her designees are the only individuals authorized to institute a snow and ice control program. Once the snow and ice control program had been initiated, field operations shall be directed by the Field Services Street Superintendent who may delegate authority to begin snow and ice control operations.

During the snow season, five Labor Supervisors will rotate evening and weekend standby duty for the snow and ice control operation unless weather conditions require a full crew call-up.

Labor Supervisors shall be responsible for providing snow and ice control maps and/or written route descriptions to equipment operators. Equipment operators are expected to keep this information available in the vehicle and to request additional copies of this information if it has been lost or damaged.

During snow and ice control operations, a majority of the other Field Services Division's operations become secondary once the program is initiated. Personnel are assigned to 12-hour shifts (7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m.). The 12 hour shifts are continued until the majority of residential streets have been cleared of snow. Personnel return to normal 8 hour shifts at this time. The Public Works Director or Field Service Street Superintendent may employ private operators and equipment should conditions warrant. The Central Maintenance Garage will also provide personnel on 12 hour shifts in order to repair equipment as soon as possible.

The Field Services Street Superintendent or his/her designee shall determine shift assignments.

GENERAL SNOW AND ICE CONTROL PROCEDURES

The City has been divided into six major snow and ice control areas, with a Labor Supervisor assigned to each. The major areas have been subdivided into sixteen spreader routes.

City streets and alleys are categorized into three priorities.

Priority One (1) - Streets in the Priority One category include hospital and emergency routes, arterial streets, transit bus system routes that are major traffic carriers, and major business districts. Priority One streets will be cleared before moving to Priority Two streets.

Priority Two (2) - Streets in the Priority Two category are the remaining transit bus system routes, through and collector streets, and other business districts.

Priority Three (3) - Residential streets, cul-de-sacs, dead ends, and alleys. The cul-de-sacs and dead ends are cleared of snow after residential streets have been completed. Cul-de-sacs require a loader for the most effective snow removal. Paved alleys will be cleared after all streets have been completed. Dirt alleys are cleared on a request basis. The only exception to this clearing operation is when an emergency situation arises. The clearing of on-street parking and the removal of center lane windrows, which requires the hauling of snow, within the Central and Morningside Business Districts, will begin when a majority of streets are opened to traffic. This work may be completed during the overnight hours to avoid traffic conflicts.

The City will maintain certain sidewalks and trails in the City. The list of those sidewalks is kept current by the Park Maintenance Supervisor and is available in his/her office. The City will only maintain these sidewalks after the streets have been plowed due to a limited number of personnel and equipment available.

The following general guidelines have been established for snow and ice control operations in Sioux City:

1. Snowfall accumulations of up to two inches, more or less, are generally handled (depending on weather conditions) by plowing drive lanes, salting, sanding, and/or a combination of salt/sand.
2. Complete (curb-to-curb) snowplowing operations generally do not begin unless snowfall accumulations measure in excess of two inches; snow is falling; and/or weather forecasts call for additional accumulation. Salting and snowplowing operations may be conducted concurrently.
3. The Public Works Director or Field Services Street Superintendent may employ private operators and equipment for snow hauling/plowing if conditions warrant it. The private operator and equipment will be hired in accordance with purchasing procedures. The Field Services Division has made prior arrangements and generally the first assignment for the private equipment will be in the Central Business District. As additional private equipment is obtained beyond that needed for the Central Business District, assignments will be made to assist City crews in other areas of the community on the basis of a particular area's need.
4. During complete (curb-to-curb) snowplowing, snowplow operators are instructed to plow the street as close as possible to the curb line with a minimum number of passes.
5. Snow plows shall drive around parked cars that block straight line snow removal.
6. Snow from the street pushed in front of a private driveway will not be removed by the City.
7. Snow plow operators are instructed to windrow the snow to the center of the street in the Downtown Central Business District, the Morningside Avenue Business District, and the W. 7th Street Business Corridor. City crews and/or private equipment haulers will haul snow out of the Downtown area after the majority of residential streets have been cleared of snow. Snow will be stored in the parkway outside of the Business Districts. If the sidewalk is close to the curb, part of the street may be utilized to store the snow. In either case, snow will not be removed from the area adjacent to the curb line or the parkway if used for storage.

8. Snow plow operators are instructed to plow paved alleys by making one pass, pushing snow to both sides. Snow will not be removed from areas adjacent to the alley rights-of-way. Dirt alleys are cleared of snow on a “request basis”.

9. City-wide snow emergency parking restrictions will be implemented when snow conditions warrant. The Mayor, or in the absence of the Mayor and Mayor Pro-Tem the City Manager, will place the restrictions into effect through the use of the media. Field Services, Police, Sioux City Fire Rescue, and the Public Works Department personnel will consult with the City Manager as to the need of implementing the Snow Emergency Restricted Parking Policy.

10. Snow plows may be removed from service or reallocated during periods of high winds and drifting or heavy falling snow.

These practices are of a general nature only and will depend upon factors such as wind, temperature, moisture content, etc. The City reserves the flexibility to change procedures depending upon the type of snow, wind, and times of the day the snow falls.

EMERGENCY SNOW ROUTES

In order to facilitate safe and effective snow and ice control, some City streets are designated Snow Routes by Chapter 10.84 of the City Code and all parking will be banned on these streets whenever a 2 inch snow fall or greater occurs and snow and ice control operations are in progress. These routes are identified by signs bearing the insignia of a white snowflake on a blue field.

Enforcement of this ordinance in Chapter 10.84 requires close cooperation between the Field Services Division and the Police Department.

SNOW EMERGENCY DECLARATION

In the event of a prediction of or the occurrence of a substantial snowfall event (greater than 6 inches) or concurrent snowfall events (two 4 inches or greater storms) that would not allow City Crews to clear the right-of-way through their normal operations, staff will recommend that the Mayor or his/her designee declare a Snow Emergency. This declaration will enact the phased restriction of parking beyond the designated emergency snow routes as outlined in the City Code. If implemented, the restrictions will be according to designated neighborhoods and restrict parking on an odd/even basis (parking is allowed on the odd numbered address side of the street on the odd numbered days and on the even numbered address side of the street on even days).

Numerous citizen concerns for snow and ice control are typical during a significant event. The Public Works Director may establish a call center to field calls and information coming in on the event. Additionally, that call center will be responsible for updating the public on the progress of the snow emergency through press releases, updating and maintaining the website including posting a current listing of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ), communication to the media, conversion of press releases to different language formats, and electronic updates. All City staff will support the call center.

Upon instituting a Snow Emergency Declaration, the Sioux City Police Department will begin enforcement of the “Odd-Even Parking” restrictions at 7:00 a.m. the following day. Enforcement will be at the discretion of either the code enforcement or law enforcement officials regarding the issuance of a warning, issuance of a citation or the removal of the vehicle. Factors may include availability of the owner, ability to move the vehicle, condition of the vehicle, current weather conditions and the availability of towing services.

If the Snow Emergency Declaration is expected to last more than 3 days, key City staff and support agencies (i.e. waste hauling, Postal Service, etc.) will meet to review the status of the clearing operations and provide feedback.

COMMUNICATIONS ACTION PLAN

Prior to the snow season each fall, the City will educate citizens and employees about snow emergencies and the impacts through a variety of communications tools. Emergency Snow Route maps will be made available on the City’s website, in various media publications, and at a variety of community locations.

When a Snow Emergency is declared, the City will notify citizens and employees of conditions through:

- News releases as needed
- The main pages of the City’s and the Field Services Division’s web pages
- Local/Cable TV
- Local Radio
- Available electronic signage
- Local newspaper
- Social Media Platforms
- Other communications tools

The Snow Priority Route maps will be posted on the City’s Website.

During a declared Snow Emergency, the Chief of Police is authorized to publicly announce non-emergency travel is not recommended or suspended when, in his/her opinion, snow or ice conditions warrant such warning restriction.

ALERTING SNOW AND ICE CONTROL PERSONNEL

Snow and ice control operations are conducted on a 24-hour basis, 7 days a week. Therefore, the Field Services Division is prepared to shift from the normal work week anytime it becomes necessary to institute snow and ice control operations. Should conditions warrant holding City crews for snow and ice control during the normal working day, those individuals assigned to the day shift are held over for an additional 4 hour period with the night shift personnel reporting in 4 hours earlier in order to comprise two 12 hour shifts. In order to maximize the use of City equipment, employees from other activities with the Field Services Division will be assigned to assist with snow and ice control operations. In order to maximize the use of City equipment, employees from other activities within the Field Services Division will be assigned to assist with snow and ice control for the duration of the emergency.

In the event it becomes necessary to begin snow and ice control operations outside of the normal working day, a current telephone call list is used to notify affected personnel. A snow and ice control program may be initiated by: 1) the City Manager, 2) the Public Works Director, 3) the Field Services Street Superintendent or his/her designee. Once the Snow and Ice Control Program is started, any individual who initiates the program will make sure the Public Works Director and the City Manager are notified as to the starting time and the possible extent of the operation.

If the decision to work 12 hour shifts is made, all key Field Services personnel are notified and each, in turn notifies personnel under his/her supervision. Prior to personnel reporting for duty, salt spreaders and snowplows are mounted. As personnel arrive, they are assigned routes and dispatched.

EQUIPMENT

The snow and ice control fleet consists of sixteen truck plows, six motor graders, seven front-end loaders, seventeen material spreader/plow trucks, and three snow blowers. Depending on storm conditions, additional equipment may be obtained from private firms to support the snow removal effort. The size of the fleet is adequate to handle the majority of snow and ice storms reasonably expected in an average snow season.

It is the intent of the Field Services Division to utilize as much of the snow and ice control equipment on the street as possible. It is impractical to assume all equipment will be operating, and provisions must be made for equipment down-time.

Exclusive of minor vehicle repair, the goal is to keep at least eighty percent of all Field Services Division equipment operational.

CHEMICAL AND ABRASIVE MATERIAL SPREADING

Generally, three combinations of material will be used for snow and ice control operations. These are straight salt, straight sand, or a combination of salt/sand. Rates of material spreading and combination of the various materials will depend on the prevailing weather conditions, and the Field Services Division Superintendent or his/her designee shall determine the application rate and materials to be used.

COMPLETE SNOWPLOWING OPERATIONS

1. Complete (curb-to-curb) snowplowing operations generally begin when accumulations have reached two inches more or less on the majority of the Priority One streets and snow is falling and/or forecasts predict significant additional snowfall. For the purposes of plowing, the City has been divided into six Areas. A Labor Supervisor within the Field Services Division will be assigned to each Area. At least one Labor Supervisor will be assigned to the night shift. Every street and alley in every district has been assigned a plowing priority. These designations will either be Priority One, Priority Two, or Priority Three. In any given area Priority One streets will be plowed before Priority Two streets are started. Priority Three streets will be plowed with alleys being plowed last. If, in a particular district, all the Priority One streets have been plowed and the Priority Two streets are commenced and it begins to snow again sufficiently to require reploving, then the Priority One streets would be reinitiated before resuming work on Priority Two streets.
2. Labor Supervisors and equipment operators are expected to be knowledgeable of areas where sidewalks are close to the curb and where medians exist and shall make every effort to avoid plowing snow onto sidewalks. Labor Supervisors will inform equipment operators unfamiliar with a particular district of areas where sidewalks are closest to the curb.
3. Equipment operators are expected to inspect equipment prior to leaving the Field Services Field Headquarters yard area to ensure equipment is in proper working condition. Brakes, lights, horns, turn signals, plow and/or material hydraulics, steering, cutting blade, edges, chains, fluid levels and tires must be checked. Operators must check fuel tanks before taking the vehicle into the field. Any malfunction of the equipment must be reported to the operator's immediate supervisor.
4. Operators are required to submit snow cards at the end of each shift. Items to be completed on these cards include date, supervisor, time, temperature, route (in "area box"), wind velocity, tons of material spread (sand, salt), spreading time, breakdowns (if any), percentage of route completed, and mileage for beginning and end of the shift. On the reverse side of the snow data card, the driver will note any deviations made from the salt/plow route due to additional calls. The operator will list the requests of streets not on the assigned route that have been salted/plowed, the time the operator received the request, and the time the request was completed.
5. Snow hauling operations in the Business Districts will generally be done at night so as to avoid heavy traffic; however, day time snow removal may be necessary due to forecast of additional snow. Private equipment may assist in this operation. Snow may be hauled away from the Business Districts after the majority of all streets are passable.
6. Operators who are involved in any crash are required to report the accident immediately. The Labor Supervisor will assess the damage and have the Legal Department and/or Police notified if warranted. Operators must also complete and submit a crash report at their earliest convenience. Operators, who are involved in a crash, may be subject to drug and alcohol testing in accordance to rules and regulations associated with their Commercial Driver's License.
7. Equipment operators are instructed to obey all traffic regulations during snow and ice control operations.

8. Personnel from the Field Services Division or other available personnel will be assigned to the “chain” crew by the Field Services Street Superintendent or his/her designee as deemed necessary.
9. At the inception of freezing rain, ice, or snow, Labor Supervisors are expected to check bridge decks in their respective areas to determine the need for material and/or plowing. Labor Supervisors are expected to be familiar with locations of bridges within their respective areas. At the inception of freezing rain, ice or snow, the 3rd Shift Labor Supervisor, or their designee, shall routinely check bridge decks to determine the need for salting and/or plowing.
10. City streets will be restored to a passable condition within 72 hours after a 4 inch snowfall has ceased. This policy is of a general nature and will depend to a great degree on storm factors; i.e., wind, temperature, moisture content, reoccurring snowfall, etc. Equipment breakdowns will also be a factor.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Provisions must be made for situations involving emergencies. In the event Field Services receives notification of an emergency situation, equipment necessary to handle the emergency will be dispatched immediately to assist until the emergency has been resolved. In order to eliminate false emergency calls to the Field Services Division, it is preferable emergency calls be routed through the Police/Fire Communications Center. Emergency calls will not always come through the Police/Fire Communications Center. Those individuals in the Field Services Division receiving emergency calls will inform the caller the Police/Fire will be notified of the emergency situation so as to be able to assist in handling the situation and to preclude false calls.

In order to assist in responding to emergencies all four-wheel drive vehicles in the City’s fleet not needed for other emergency situations may be assigned to the Field Services Field Headquarters. These vehicles will be reassigned by the Field Services Division as needed.

SERVICE REQUEST/CONCERN-PROCEDURE

Requests for service will be logged and forwarded to the Labor Supervisor in charge of the area. Concerns, routine or emergency, may be handled by the Labor Supervisor in that area or the Field Services Street Superintendent. Property damage calls will be referred to the Legal Department, and the Labor Supervisor from that area will investigate the complaint and file a report.

ORDINANCES INCLUDED BY REFERENCE

- Chapter 10.84 - Parking Restrictions During Snow Emergency
- Chapter 17.24 - Snow and Ice Removal

EMERGENCY SNOW ROUTES/AREA MAPS

The Field Services Street Superintendent shall maintain a City map showing the **Priority One** streets. Criteria for determining **Priority One** streets includes such items

as primary routes to emergency facilities, major arterial streets, major business districts, and major transit system bus routes. This map will be reviewed annually by Field Services, Public Works, Police, Fire Rescue and Transit and be posted at the City's web site.

DEPARTURE FROM POLICY

The City recognizes conditions may be so unusual or unexpected that a departure from these general policies should be authorized. The City Manager or the Public Works Director, in consultation with the Field Services Street Superintendent, Fire Chief, or Chief of Police may order a departure from these general rules when, in his/her opinion, conditions warrant such action.

DISCLAIMER

To the extent any previous rule, regulation, policy, or past practice, written or unwritten, is in conflict with the provisions of this policy, such is hereby withdrawn, voided and all personnel should conduct themselves in conformity with this policy.