

Chapter 12.03

Howard Lake Snow Plowing/Ice Control Procedures

Section 1. Purpose and Need for Policy. The City of Howard Lake, being a growing City, needs to annually review and adopt a policy regarding efficient and timely removal of snow and control of ice in order to best provide for safe travel for the greatest number of persons. This policy outlines the responsibility within the Public Works Department in order to accomplish this goal.

Section 2. Policy. Each year the Pubic Works Department prepares a map of the City showing the public street system. This map clearly delineates thoroughfare and local residential streets. The map is then divided into routes for purposes of snow and ice control.

Within each of areas, the City has classified city streets based on the street function, relative traffic volume, and importance to the welfare of the community. Those streets classified as priority “A” streets will be plowed first. These are higher volume streets which connect major sections of the city and provide access for emergency fire, police and medical services. The second priority streets (priority “B”) are those streets providing access to schools and commercial businesses. The third priority streets (priority “C”) are low volume residential streets. Fourth priority (priority “D”) are cul-de-sacs. (See Exhibit A).

Section 3. Procedures. The Police Department assists Maintenance Division Supervisors in monitoring street conditions and notifies Maintenance Division personnel of snow and ice conditions needing attention. Maintenance Division personnel are notified in accordance with the Public Works Department Schedule for Emergency Calls.

The Maintenance Division, with the assistance of the Police Department, monitors street conditions and is responsible for making the decision to call out personnel and equipment to begin snow and ice control operations.

Section 4. Responsibility. The Maintenance Division, with the assistance of the Police Department, monitors the street conditions to determine the timing and amount of equipment and personnel necessary to clear the streets.

Section 5. Commencement of Operations. Snow plowing and/or ice control operations shall commence under the direction of the Street Superintendent and the Public Works Foreman. In his absence the Police Department Patrol Officer on duty and the Superintendent’s designated representative will consult and determine when and what operations will begin in accordance with provisions of Exhibit A attached.

In general, operations shall commence as follows:

- A. Snow accumulation of 2”, with continual snow fall, warrants commencement of plowing operations.

- B. Drifting of snow may warrant commencement of partial or full operations depending upon conditions.
- C. Icing of pavements may warrant partial or full operation depending upon extent and conditions.

Section 6. How Snow Will Be Plowed. Snow shall 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 with the discharge going onto the boulevard area of the right-of-way. It is the Departmental goal to have the entire street system cleaned after a “typical” snowfall in approximately 10 hours, assuming a general plowing operation beginning at 3:00 A.M. and snowfall ending by 7:00 A.M. Depending on snowfall conditions and duration of the storm, cleanup operations can widely fluctuate.

Section 7. Use of Sand and Salt. The City is concerned about the effect of sand and salt on the environment and will limit its use for that reason. Therefore, it is the policy of the City to utilize a sand and salt mixture in the ratio of approximately 3 parts sand and 1 part salt. This provides for traction, but is not intended to provide bare pavement during winter conditions. Application of the sand/salt mixture is generally limited to priority “A” routes, steep grades and high volume intersections. Application is limited on lower volume streets and cul-de-sacs. The City cannot be responsible for damage to grass caused by the sand/salt mixture and therefore will not make repairs or compensate residents for salt damage to turf areas in the street right-of-way.

Section 8. Suspension of Operations. Generally, operations shall continue until all roads are passable. Widening and clean up operations may continue immediately or on the following working day depending upon conditions and circumstances. Safety of the plow operators and the public is important. Therefore, snow plowing/removal operations may be terminated after 10-12 hours to allow personnel adequate time for rest. There may be instances when this is not possible depending on storm conditions and other circumstances. Operations may also be suspended during periods of limited visibility. Any decision to suspend operations shall be made by the Street Division Superintendent and Public Works Foreman, and shall be based on the conditions of the storm. The City will still provide access for emergency fire, police and medical services during a major snow or ice storm.

Section 9. Property Damage. Snow plowing and ice control operations can cause property damage even under the best of circumstances and care on the part of the operators. The major types of damage are to improvements in the City right-of-way which extends approximate 10’ to 15’ beyond the curb location. The intent of the right-of-way is to provide room for snow storage, utilities, sidewalks and other City uses. However, certain private improvements such as mailboxes are required within this area. Therefore, the City will cooperate with the property owner to determine if the damage is the responsibility of the City and when it shall be the responsibility of the resident. The City accepts responsibility for mailboxes which are allowed to be placed in the road right-of-way, if the damage is by physically being struck by a plow blade, wing, or other piece of equipment. Mailboxes should be constructed sturdily enough to withstand snow rolling off a plow or a wing. Therefore, damage resulting from snow is the responsibility of the resident. The City will repair or replace mailboxes in those instances where the City is

responsible for the damage. Damage to fences, trees or other structures will be repaired or replaced by the City if they are on private property. Lawns that are scraped or gouged by City equipment will be repaired by top dressing and seeding the following Spring. Residents are requested to assist by watering the areas that are repaired.

In instances where there is disagreement as to the source of the damage and the responsibility therefore, the Foreman of Public Works and/or Police Department shall determine the responsibility.

Section 10. Driveways. One of the most frequent and most irritable problems in removal of snow from public streets is the snow deposited in driveways during plowing operations. Snow being accumulated on the plow blade has no place to go but in the driveway. The driver's make every attempt to minimize the amount of snow deposited in driveways, but the amount can still be significant. Based on priorities and staffing level, City personnel do not provide driveway cleaning.

Section 11. Mail Delivery. The snow plow operators make every effort to remove snow as close to the curb line as practical and to provide access to mailboxes for the Postal Department. However, it is not possible to provide perfect conditions and minimize damage to mailboxes with the size and type of equipment the City operates. Therefore, the final cleaning adjacent to mailboxes is the responsibility of each resident.

Section 12. Complaints. Complaints regarding snow and ice control or damage shall be taken during normal working hours and handled in accordance with the City's complaint procedures. Complaints involving access to property or problems requiring immediate attention shall be handled on a priority basis. 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 City's intention to log all complaints and upgrade this policy as necessary in consideration of the constraints of our resources.

Section 13. Towing. The City Police Department is hereby authorized to have towed away and stored any vehicle found to be parked in violation of this chapter. The owner may reclaim the vehicle by exhibiting satisfactory proof of ownership and paying in full all towing and storage charges for said vehicle.

Snow Removal From Public Sidewalks

Section 14. Cleaning Sidewalks. All property owners and occupants of all buildings and lots shall be responsible for maintaining all sidewalks at the front, rear, or side of their property. Snow shall be removed from all sidewalks by (6) six o'clock am, in all commercial and business zoning districts, Snow shall be removed from all sidewalks by (10) ten o'clock a. m. in all residential zoning districts. The occupants and owners of all buildings and lots shall be responsible for the cost and arrangements of snow removal.

Section 15. City Removal. If the owner or occupant of the property abutting any public

sidewalk upon which snow or ice has accumulated fails to abate the nuisance thereby created within twenty-four (24) hours after such snow or ice has ceased to be deposited upon such sidewalk, the City Administrator or his designated agent may cause the removal of such snow or ice. The agent causing such removal shall maintain a record showing the cost of such removal attributable to each separate lot and parcel and shall deliver such information to the City Administrator. The cost for removal is at a rate of \$35.00 per hour with a one hour minimum \$35.00 charge. If it is necessary to have the snow hauled away, an additional charge of \$50.00 per hour shall be charged.

Section 16. Assessment. Upon receipt of the information required by the preceding subdivision, the City Administrator shall forward to the Council a statement setting forth the unpaid charge for the cost of the removal of any snow or ice pursuant to Section 14 hereof for each separate lot or parcel. The Council may then, pursuant to the provisions of Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 429, assess any such charge against the property benefited, and any such assessment shall, at the time at which taxes are certified to the County Auditor, be certified for collection in the manner that other special assessments are so certified.

Section 17. Civil Suit for Cost of Removal. The City Administrator or City Council as an alternative to the assessment procedure set forth in Section 15, may initiate a civil suit in a court of competent jurisdiction to recover from the owner of land adjacent to which sidewalks have been cleared as provided in Section 2 hereof, the cost of the removal of snow or ice, together with allowable costs and disbursements.

Section 18. Placing Snow or Ice on Public Streets or City Property. It is unlawful for any person, not acting under contract with the City, to remove snow or ice from private property and place, in such quantity or manner as to cause a hazard to travel, such snow or ice upon a public right-of-way, without proper arrangements for the immediate removal thereof. It is unlawful for any person, not acting under contract with the City, to place or deposit any snow or ice upon City property.

Parking Regulations

Section 19. Times and Date of Prohibited Parking. No vehicle shall be left standing or parked between 2:30 AM. and 7:00 AM. on any street, state highway, or county road within the city limits of the City of Howard Lake. This provision shall be in force between 12:01 AM. on November 1st of every year and 11:59 P.M. on March 31st of the following year.

Section 20. Parking Prohibited Until Street Plowed. Immediately after the end of a snowfall, no vehicle shall be left standing or parked upon any street or other right-of-way within the city limits of the City of Howard Lake until said street or highway is plowed.

Section 21. Plowing, General Snow Removal. Downtown streets shall generally be plowed in the same manner as all other city streets. The Street Superintendent or the Public Works Foreman may elect to plow downtown streets during evening or early morning hours to avoid traffic and parked vehicle congestion. Downtown streets may be plowed outward or to the center of the street at the discretion of the Street Superintendent or Public Works Foreman. City owned

parking lots are generally plowed at the same time as downtown streets. Snow may be piled for removal when snow is hauled from downtown.

Section 22. Snow Hauling. Downtown snow hauling, if necessary, shall begin after all streets have been plowed.

Section 23. Wright County or State of Minnesota Street Maintenance. Certain streets within the City are maintained by Wright County or the State of Minnesota and fall under the county or state maintenance policies.

Section 24. Snow Depths. Snow depth at the corners of intersections shall be reduced to 36 inches or less following other necessary operations. The Street Superintendent or Public Works Foreman have the authority to determine the scheduling and priority of this function.

Section 25. No Parking Zones. The City Council may by resolution designate and establish certain areas where there shall be no parking during specified hours for snow removal. The Police Department and the Street Superintendent shall mark by appropriate signs all zones so established. During the hours specified no person shall park in said zone.

Section 26. Penalty. Any person convicted of violating any provision of this ordinance shall be guilty of a misdemeanor.

EXHIBIT “A”
Plowing/Sanding Priorities

PRIORITY “A”

Streets with greatest priority

PRIORITY “B”

Streets providing access to schools and commercial property

PRIORITY “C”

Lower volume residential streets

PRIORITY “D”

Cul-de-sacs