



## **Snowplowing and Ice Control Policy**

Adopted by Town Council on: November 18, 2008

Resolution No: 2008-110

# SNOWPLOWING AND ICE CONTROL POLICY

## 1. Introduction

The Town of Castle Rock, Colorado, finds that it is in the best interest of the residents of the Town to assume basic responsibility for control of snow and ice on Town streets. Reasonable snow and ice control is necessary for routine travel and emergency services. The Town will attempt to provide such control in a safe and cost-effective manner keeping in mind safety, budget, personnel, and environmental concerns. The Town will use Town employees & equipment and/or private contractors to provide this service.

The snowplowing and ice control policy is intended to keep the streets within the Town passable during adverse weather conditions and in reasonably safe condition. This intent, and the reasonable limitation of cost effectiveness, is the basis for this policy.

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. Level of Service

The time required to clear snow and ice from streets depends on a variety of conditions often unique to each storm event. The strategy used to plow streets depends on the interaction of several factors including:

- Snow storm intensity and accumulation
- Anticipated snow storm duration
- Type of snow – light/dry or heavy/wet
- Temperature before and after snowfall
- High winds-drifting
- Traffic conditions
- Time of day
- Available equipment & staff

Snowplowing and/or ice control will be completed for each storm event on primary streets (Priorities 1 and 2) when the accumulation of snow or ice is predicted to be more than four (4) inches.

Snowplowing will be completed for each storm event on secondary streets (Priorities 3 and 4) routes when the accumulation of snow or ice is predicted to be more than four (4) inches between November 15 and March 15. Or, when the accumulation of snow or ice is predicted to be more than eight (8) inches prior to November 15 or after March 15.

The Public Works Street Operations Division utilizes the National Weather Service, the Town's Police Department and the Douglas County Sheriff's Department to help determine when snow and ice control operations should begin. After normal working hours, this will typically be done by the use of Town police officers in the field contacting the Dispatch area and advising them of potentially adverse road conditions.

The Town's Street Operations Manager will decide when to begin snow or ice control operations. The criteria for that decision includes:

- Anticipated snow accumulation of two (2) inches or more;
- Drifting of snow that causes problems for travel;
- Icy conditions which seriously affect travel;
- Time of year and predicted weather forecast; and
- Time of snowfall in relationship to heavy use of streets.

Snow and ice control operations are expensive and involve the use of limited personnel and equipment. Consequently snowplowing operations will not generally be conducted for snowfall of less than two (2) inches. When snowplowing and/or ice control operations are initiated, all primary streets (Priorities 1 and 2) will be plowed.

Secondary streets (Priorities 3 and 4) may or may not be plowed when snow and ice control operations are initiated for primary streets. The criteria to initiate snowplowing on secondary streets involve a determination of whether the streets will be passable for vehicles based on the predicted storm event. Temperatures and time of year will also be considered. No more snow will be plowed than is necessary to maintain two-way traffic. Generally, secondary streets will be plowed when the accumulation of snow or ice is predicted to be more than four (4) inches:

- Between November 15 and March 15, or
- Is predicted to deposit snow greater than 8 inches in depth prior to November 15 or after March 15

No general ice control will be performed on secondary streets. Ice control on steep slopes and stop sign approaches will be performed on secondary streets as determined to be necessary.

### **3. Street Priorities**

The Town has classified Town streets based on the street function, traffic volume and importance to the welfare of the community. Two (2) categories of streets with four (4) priority rankings have been established. A map of the Town streets and their Priority ranking is located on the Town website.

#### **Primary Streets**

**Priority 1:** Those streets classified as arterials, major collectors, commercial/industrial and commercial business areas. These are typically high volume streets that connect major sections of the Town and provide access for emergency fire, police, and medical services.

Priority 2: Those streets classified as minor collectors and school bus routes or those roads providing access to schools.

### **Secondary Streets**

Priority 3: Low-volume and residential streets.

Priority 4: Cul-de-sacs and alleys.

During significant and severe storms, the Town must be prepared to move personnel and equipment to maintain primary streets 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 primary streets.

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.

## **4. Plowing Method**

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. On one-way streets or where there is a center boulevard, snow may be pushed in either direction. The discharge shall go onto the area behind the curb for primary streets and into the parking area on secondary streets. Snow in cul-de-sacs will normally be plowed to the center in an attempt to provide the largest turning radius possible for emergency vehicle ingress and egress. When a plow goes on a bridge, the driver shall slow down so snow does not go over the bridge, if possible. In times of extreme snowfall, streets will not always immediately be able to be completely cleared of snow.

Streets in the downtown area will be plowed to create a windrow of snow in the center of the street. Removal of the snow in these windrows will be completed as specified in **Section 5**. This special service improves overall driving conditions and allows for public parking where pedestrian and vehicle traffic volumes are the highest.

## **5. Snow Removal**

The Town's Street Operations Manager will determine if and when snow will be removed from an area by truck. Such snow removal will occur in areas where there is no room on the street or in vegetated areas behind the curb 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.

#### **6. Snow & Ice Control Operator's Schedule**

Snowplow operators will be expected to work ten- to twelve-hour shifts. Because of safety concerns, no operator shall work more than a twelve-hour shift in any twenty-four hour period. Operators will take a fifteen-minute break every two hours with a half-hour meal break after four hours. After a twelve-hour shift, the operators will be replaced if additional qualified personnel are available.

#### **7. 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.

#### **8. Use of Sand, Salt, and Other Chemicals**

The Town will use sand, salt, and other chemicals when there are hazardous ice or slippery conditions. The Town is concerned about the effect of such chemicals on the environment and will limit its use for that reason.

The application of sand and salt during storm events has been identified by the Regional Air Quality Council (RAQC) as a major contributor to the metropolitan area's pollution. The Public Works Department is required under legal mandates, which are regulated by the RAQC, to comply with certain application rates or be fined. Limiting the application rates reduces the quantity of particulates in the air and the amount of chemicals and sand deposited in wetlands and waterways.

#### **9. Emergency Situations**

All requests for emergency assistance from the following agencies will be responded to immediately:

- Town of Castle Rock Police Department
- Town of Castle Rock Fire Department
- Douglas County Sheriff's Office
- Colorado Department of Transportation
- Colorado Highway Patrol or
- Other emergency service agency

Calls for emergency assistance from the public will be transferred to Police Dispatch or requested to call 911.

#### **10. Emergency Declaration and Emergency Operations Center (EOC)**

In the event of a snow emergency, the Town Manager or his designee will make a Declaration of Snow Storm Conditions in accordance with Municipal Code 10.10.030. Following this declaration, traffic control and law enforcement will

assume actions under Municipal Codes 10.10.040 and 10.10.050. These actions will commence until the Town Manager or his designee terminates the Snow Storm Condition, as outlined in Municipal Code 10.10.060.

The Town Manager may also activate an emergency operations center to centralize response activities and coordinate communications with the public.

#### **11. Disabled Vehicles**

Town employees and contract personnel will not assist vehicles that are stuck in the snow or otherwise disabled. If a vehicle is impeding the safe travel on a street, the Police Department may tow the vehicle at the owner's expense.

#### **12. Sidewalks**

It is the responsibility of the resident and/or property owner to remove all accumulated snow from all sidewalks along public streets adjoining their property. This includes any snow plowed from public streets onto the sidewalk, driveways or driveway openings, (see **Section 17** also).

#### **13. Snow Removal on Private Property**

Unless it is necessary to provide access for an emergency vehicle, Town resources will not be used to plow, remove snow or provide ice control on private property.

#### **14. Ice Cutting**

If conditions occur that create icing in gutters and cross-pans that are determined to be unsafe, the ice will be cut and removed. This action will be performed in the same priority as streets are plowed.

#### **15. Mailboxes**

Coming into contact with a mailbox is a common obstacle snowplow operators face during storm activities. The Town will conduct a review of each mailbox incident to determine whether the Town will replace or provide reimbursement for the mailbox. Only mailboxes actually hit by a snowplow will be the responsibility of the Town. The Town will not be responsible for damage to mailboxes or support posts caused by snow or ice coming into contact with the mailbox. At the mailbox owner's request, the Town will replace the mailbox, to postal standards, with a standard size, non-decorative metal mailbox and replace the support post as necessary with a 4" x 4", decay resistant wood support post, both installed by the Town. Alternatively, the Town will reimburse the mailbox owner \$50.00 for the replacement of the mailbox and post by others.

#### **16. Public Information**

If a snow emergency is declared in accordance with Municipal Code 10,10.030, a "Snow Hot Line" will be implemented to provide citizens and motorists with information related to snowplowing and ice control efforts. General information will also be provided on the Town's website.

## **17. Property Owner Responsibilities**

Per Municipal Code §12.16.030, property owners must remove all snow and ice from sidewalks within forty-eight (48) hours following the termination of any snow event, which causes two (2) or more inches of accumulation upon such sidewalks. This includes snow that is plowed from public streets onto the sidewalk, driveways or driveway openings. Snow must be piled on the lawn or other private area. It may not be shoveled into or deposited in the street or other public right-of-way as this can impede drainage and contribute to icing on the roadways and sidewalks.

Property owners must also clear any snow or deposited snow away from their mailboxes and fire hydrants.

Besides the above actions, business owners/commercial property owners must remove all snow from handicapped parking spaces within their private parking lots and provide a clear path to their business entrance. Snow may not be deposited in streets, public rights-of-way or storm water detention areas.

## **18. Complaint Procedure**

Complaints will be recorded on telephone logs. Calls 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.

## **19. Deviation from Policy**

The Street Operations Manager may deviate from this policy when in his or her judgment it is in the best interest of the Town 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 Town 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 Town for emergency notifications.

## **20. Review and Modification of Policy**

The Street Operations Manager shall keep on file all comments and complaints received regarding this policy. The policy will be reviewed periodically. Any review will consider comments and complaints since the last review and any other factors affecting the policy or its implementation.

## **21. Related Ordinances**

The following ordinances pertain to snow removal and plowing activities:

Municipal Code Section	Description
9.16.050	Exemptions from Town noise ordinance for snow plowing equipment
10.04.030	Limits operation of vehicles on roadways where the roadway may be damaged as a result of snow or other climatic conditions
10.10	Snow routes – definitions, designation, declaration of snow storm conditions, parking restrictions, etc.
12.16.030	Property owners responsibilities' related to snow removal on private property