

## **6.2 Snow & Ice Removal**

### **I. General Statement**

The purpose of this document is to have in place a written plan to respond to the snow and ice control needs for roads maintained by the Town of Colchester (the "Plan"). This Plan defines the responsibilities of both the Town of Colchester and the Public during snow and ice control activities.

Notwithstanding the circumstances involved with changing climatic conditions, the Town will endeavor to keep Town-maintained roads in a reasonably safe condition for travelers. The Town will endeavor to exercise reasonable care and diligence in the performance of their duties, consistent with the intent of this Plan. Travelers who use Town-maintained roads are expected to demonstrate due care and reasonable caution, especially under adverse weather conditions.

Any and all statements included in this Plan shall supercede any previous written, oral, or past practice procedures, unless otherwise stated herein or specifically amended orally or in writing by the Director of Public Works or the Board of Selectmen of the Town of Colchester.

### **II. Duration of Plan**

Emergencies notwithstanding, this policy shall be considered guidelines for use in the Public Works Department defined as "Winter Maintenance Season", generally from 15 November through 15 April, annually. These guidelines shall be used during this period regardless of time of day or day of week. The Department is prepared at any time during this period to suspend normal operations and initiate snow and ice control activities as described in these guidelines.

### **III. Connecticut General Statute**

Section 13a-107: Selectmen are to open highway blocked by snow. Whenever any highway becomes blocked with snow to an extent that renders the same impassable for public travel, the selectmen of the Town in which such highway is located shall cause such highway to be opened for public travel at the expense of such Town within a reasonable time thereafter, if they find the same to be required for public convenience and necessity. Any selectman who fails to open

any highway so blocked, when requested in writing to do so by six taxpayers residing on or near such highway, shall be fined ten dollars. The provision shall not apply to any highway within the limits of any city or borough, unless the Town has the supervision of the highways in such city or borough.

#### **IV. General Procedures**

Snow and ice control work must be carried out on the premise that such work is under emergency conditions. Therefore, proper advanced preparation is necessary. This preparation includes obtaining the necessary materials for use during winter snow and ice control operations, maintenance of equipment used prior, during, and after these operations, and a plan for scheduling and directing personnel.

Materials - Suitable quantities of suitable materials shall be obtained and stored in preparation for use for snow and ice control operations. New technologies are allowing the use of new products such as treated salt to be used in conjunction with or in place of, a sand/salt mix. Other treatments may be developed from time to time. These products may be used as approved by the Director.

Prior to the Winter Maintenance Season, arrangements shall be made for the delivery and storage of suitable quantities of materials for the anticipated duration of single or multiple storm events. If necessary, additional quantities shall be available should the need arise. Any company supplying snow and ice control materials must be capable of delivering additional quantities in a short turnaround time after requested. Storage shall be at a location convenient for efficient use during snow and ice control activities. Storage of these materials shall be consistent with all applicable standards and regulations.

Equipment – All snow and ice control equipment shall be installed and checked for proper operation in mid-October to provide sufficient time for unanticipated maintenance to be performed prior to 15 November. Beginning with the first weekend after 15 November, all vehicles shall be dressed for winter snow and ice control work prior to the end of work on the last work day prior to the weekend (or holiday) unless otherwise directed by the Public Works Director or Highway Supervisor.

All equipment shall be thoroughly checked prior to leaving the yard in accordance with CDL requirements with a pre-trip check list filled out. All vehicles shall be evaluated throughout the work period by the driver with any problems identified and reported to the Supervisor. Any significant problems shall be reported immediately directly to the fleet maintenance department in accordance with standard practice.

Overloading Vehicles – No vehicle shall be intentionally overloaded. While it is not possible to weigh each vehicle during snow and ice control activities, the

Town of Colchester has taken the effort to weigh each truck and each truck axle during undressed, dressed, loaded with plow up and loaded with plow down configurations in an effort to ensure that no vehicle will be overloaded or that any component of the vehicle will be overloaded. This information was used to determine the acceptable amount of snow and ice control material that can be safely loaded into the dump body of each truck.

Plow Routes – A master list of plow routes shall be reviewed and updated annually and maintained by the Public Works Director. Factors used to determine plow routes (both order and number of roads) shall include, but not be limited to, traffic levels on streets; types of traffic using streets; routes used to access maintenance routes; maximizing personnel and equipment; and ability to provide contingency routes/plans. Plow route order shall give priority to heavily traveled/collector roads and roads with steep hills. Each driver shall be given a copy of all routes.

Each driver shall be responsible for, and make themselves familiar with, their routes. Drainage structures and other conditions should be marked. High risk areas (steep hills, sharp corners, obstructions, etc.) should be identified and a proper response planned. Alternate driver(s) or contractors shall be familiar with each route to serve as back-up(s) in the event a driver is unable to report for duty.

Supervision – All Town Highway crew members and any contractors shall be under the ultimate supervision of the Public Works Director, First Selectman, or an appointed designee. The Highway Department Supervisor shall supervise field operations prior, during, and after storm events in conjunction with the Public Works Director.

Call-out – Call out of Highway crew members and any contractors for winter snow and ice control measures shall be determined by the Highway Supervisor and Public Works Director depending on the conditions of the storm event. Conditions used to evaluate the call out response include, but are not limited to, predicted quantity, intensity, duration, time, and area of impact of the storm. Call out, and release, will be made in accordance with the bargaining unit contract and CDL regulations.

Storm Event – All vehicles shall be properly inspected prior to leaving the garage. Plow activities and the sensible use of snow and ice control materials shall be conducted in accordance with the specific storm and road conditions. During a snow storm event, depending on the intensity and duration, priority will be given to keeping the center of the roadway as clear as possible (this will maximize the amount of roads that can be cleared as well as to better allow the salt brine to work on the roadway).

All vehicles shall be in constant radio contact with the Highway Supervisor. The

Supervisor shall be notified immediately in the event of a breakdown or other critical or unusual nature. The Supervisor shall be notified any time a driver will be out of the truck (including breaks, meals, etc.). Any breaks, other than those included in the contract, shall be designated by the Supervisor to sustain safe snow and ice control operations. Otherwise, radio transmissions shall be kept to a minimum.

Flashing warning lights and strobes shall be used at all times while trucks are engaged in snow and ice control activities.

Plowing speed will depend on the type of snow and road condition. In no event, shall the speed of the vehicle be such that the material is cast an excessive distance from the edge of the road. Plowing speeds shall be adjusted to prevent the showering of pedestrians, sidewalks, buildings, and vehicles. While it is understood some snow will cover driveway entrances, mailboxes, and sidewalks, there shall be no excessive speeding while engaged in snow and ice control operations.

When plowing into an intersection of a Town and State road, no snow shall be left on the travel portion of the State road as a result of the Town's operation.

Plowing and sensible application of snow and ice control material shall continue for the duration of the storm. After snow has ceased falling/accumulating and the centers of the roadways are clear, accumulated snow on the remaining portions of the road shall be pushed back as far as practical. Care should be taken during these pushing back operations to limit the amount of snow thrown onto already cleared driveways and sidewalks and in front of mailboxes. Intersections should be pushed back to provide sufficient turning radius and sight lines. Drainage inlets, outlets, structures, and leak-offs shall be opened to ensure unrestricted flow during thaw.

Upon completion of all plowing and material application activities, trucks shall be returned to the garage and re-inspected. All vehicles shall be thoroughly cleaned and greased. Any equipment malfunctions shall be reviewed by the Fleet Maintenance department and identified as repaired, acceptable for use, or removed from service for repair.

Release – Snow and ice control operations shall continue until one or more of the following levels of road condition have been established:

- (a) bare, uncovered roadways with all snow and ice pushed back to edge of pavement or curb with intersections and cul-de-sacs complete;
- (b) covered, snow-packed, and treated roads with no accumulations greater than about 3 in. pushed back to edge of pavement or curb with intersections and cul-de-sacs complete;

- (c) major collector and secondary roads opened up with a minimum of one lane of travel in each direction; this may include significant accumulations still on the roads, but vehicles properly equipped for winter driving with operators using appropriate caution, should be able to pass – local access roads, such as subdivision streets, may only be one travel lane for both directions. Routine access may be difficult in some areas. Emergency access available to all locations with the Town, with properly equipped emergency equipment;
- (d) until such time as all or the majority of equipment and/or manpower has been expended in removal efforts, and further efforts at this stage would be counter productive;
- (e) at such time the Public Works Director feels continued operations would constitute imminent danger to the Public or Town employees;
- (f) at such time it is determined that continued resource expenditures are in excess of what may be judicious use of public funds;
- (g) the level of service is consistent with the specific instructions from the Public Works Director.

At this point, the Highway Supervisor shall determine the need for additional removal efforts. This decision will be influenced by weather conditions, time of day, day of week, available resources, financial reserves, date, and other factors. Oral communication will be maintained between the Highway Department Supervisor and the Superintendent of Schools, Police Department shift commander, and other emergency departments/personnel so that a coordinated effort will be maintained.

Post Storm - Localized and isolated accumulations of snow (including drifts) and ice patches may exist or develop during or after snow and ice control operations. Melting during the day may result in ice patches forming as temperatures drop or overnight. Drainage areas resulting in frequent icing conditions, if identified, shall be kept thoroughly treated and may require the installation of warning signs. All "problem" locations shall be reported to the Supervisor and a record maintained. Such locations shall be investigated and efforts made to correct the source of the problem.

Time Limitations – All reasonable efforts will be made to attempt to have all roadways cleared to the curb line/edge of pavement within a total of 72 hours of the last snowfall. Except in cases of extremes, all Town roadways shall be cleared to an adequate level within 24 hours of the last snowfall, exclusive of turnarounds.

Post Storm Critique – The Supervisor shall hold a post storm critique after the first full call out storm to review route assignments, problem areas, damages to Town or personal property, other storm-related issues, and to obtain comments from crew members. During the remainder of the winter, periodic critiques shall be held as necessary with the full crew or with individual drivers.

Winter Vacations – Requests for vacation or personal time during the winter snow and ice control season shall be given as far in advance as possible to allow time to plan for the necessary coverage on that driver's route.

Vacation or personal time granted during the winter season in which an employee wishes to be considered available for snow and ice control operations shall be paid at applicable rates in accordance with the contract.

Private Contractors – Private contractors will be used to supplement the operations of the Public Works Department staff and equipment. Contractors will be responsible for operator(s), vehicle equipment, maintenance, and fuel, as outlined in their contract. The Town will supply road snow and ice control materials. Contractors will be called in at the time of a full call out only as deemed appropriate by the Director or Highway Supervisor. Partial staff call out for spot work will be performed by Town staff.

Emergency Access – The Town of Colchester may in its sole discretion, perform minimal winter maintenance on such roadways of the Town that are unaccepted and normally do not receive such services, on a case by case basis. These services, if performed, will be strictly to maintain safe access for emergency equipment and personnel.

This may be considered where snow is in excess of 4 to 5 inches, or severe icing would impeded vehicles equipped for severe weather. This practice is not designed to accommodate the inconvenience associated with private roads that do not contract for, or do not have adequate maintenance. Nor is it designed to accommodate persons that use Town owned but generally not maintained rights of way. It is strictly to ensure the health and safety of the residents of Colchester and to ensure the safety of emergency personnel.

The Town of Colchester reserves the right to charge the private property owner(s) for services provided as a result of no or inadequate maintenance activities.

Parking Ban – In accordance with Town Ordinance 709 and 710, in the event of predictions or anticipation of winter storm events, the First Selectman or Public Works Director may request a parking ban be effected. This request shall be made public via television and/or radio announcement(s) and will be routed to the Police shift commander. Any vehicle found impeding snow and ice control operations during such bans will be referred to the Police Department with a request for removal.

Mailboxes – Postal Service regulations dictate the location of mailboxes and posts in close proximity to the edge of pavement within the Town right of way. This right of way is also the Town's snow shelf thereby creating a conflict when

the two try to occupy the same space. Generally, the snow will win the battle and inevitably, mailboxes and posts may get damaged. All efforts shall be made by each operator to avoid damage to mailboxes and posts. However, should damage occur, the driver shall report the incident to the Supervisor and shall be responsible for providing a replacement post (and/or box). Any aggrieved individual should be directed to contact the Public Works Department who will investigate the incident and determine if compensation is warranted. It is the practice of the Town of Colchester to provide a replacement mailbox and/or post if it is determined the damage resulted from the Town's snow and ice control operations. However, the Town is under no obligation to install such replacement materials, nor is the Town under any obligation to provide a replacement in kind to the damaged materials.

In addition, residents are encouraged to take all necessary precautions to protect their mailbox and post while not creating a road hazard.

Driveways – Reasonable attempts will be made to keep driveways clear of plowed snow and ice. However, it is virtually impossible to clear the roadways adequately without placing some snow and ice in driveway aprons. Any Town of Colchester employee found either placing snow deliberately in a driveway, or conversely, deliberately plowing a private driveway, shall be disciplined.

When plowing, shoveling, or blowing snow from driveways or sidewalks, no resident or contractor performing such work shall cause snow or ice to be left on the travel portion of the Town's road as a result of the resident's operation. Such action is considered a hazard and can result in unsafe driving conditions.

Public Sand – As long as such materials are readily available, mixed sand/salt for non-commercial residential use will be available at the west end of the Town Highway Garage parking lot. A pile of the mixed product will be replenished at the end of each work day. Each resident obtaining the sand/salt mix shall be limited to two, 5-gallon size buckets per visit in an effort to provide as many residents as possible the opportunity to participate in this service. Any resident identified as abusing this service will be requested to cease use immediately.

Under no circumstances will sand be distributed from the Public Works Garage, or will any Public employee load a private vehicle. Any commercial users found to be using any of these materials shall be referred to the Police Department for prosecution.

Use of Roads During Snow and Ice Control Activities – Residents and users of Colchester roads are requested to maintain a safe distance behind any Town vehicle engaged in winter snow and ice control activities. This distance will vary depending on the road, conditions, and time of day or night. However, a minimum of 200 ft. should be maintained behind these vehicles as they may stop or back up at any given time to perform snow and ice control activities.

Complaint Policy – Any complaint received by the Public Works Department resulting from poor clearing or damage shall be investigated. Staffing levels shall dictate the expediency in investigation of complaints of this nature. Upon investigation, the Department shall determine whether the complaint is justified or unfounded, and take appropriate action, if any, to rectify the problem. Complaints will be accepted generally only during normal business hours. However, any complaints initiated during a storm shall be investigated.

Lines of Authority – The Highway Supervisor shall have the authority, upon coordination with the Public Works Director or First Selectman, to designate an individual to act in his behalf for individual situations, specific incidents, or entire snow and ice control emergencies, as is necessary to implement this Plan.

Review/Revisions - This Plan shall be reviewed annually by the Public Works Department and revised as necessary to maintain the intent of the Plan. All revisions shall be approved by the Board of Selectmen.