

City of Pittsfield

Snow and Ice Control Plan

Overall Program

The City of Pittsfield encompasses 42.5 square miles and has a population of approximately 45,000 people. The City is responsible for snow and ice control on:

- 208 miles of roads (accepted and unaccepted)
- 6 miles of sidewalk
- 20 City Owned buildings (including 14 school properties)
- 5 Parking Lots
- 2 Parking Garages
- 2 Lakes Entrances and Parking Lots
- Parks and Conservation entrances and partial lots

The Department of Public Services has the primary responsibility for the execution of the snow and ice control plan. Support is provided by the Building Maintenance, Public Utilities and Police Departments. In addition, the Fire Department plows the Fire Station lots.

In addition, there are 10 miles of state owned roads that are maintained by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts: Cheshire Road (Dalton Ave to Lanesboro town line), Dalton Avenue (Plastics Ave to Dalton town line), Merrill Road (Dalton Ave to East St), South Street (South Mountain Rd to Lenox town line), West Housatonic Street (railroad underpass to Hancock town line), and Central Berkshire Boulevard (West Housatonic St to Richmond town line)

Snow and Ice Control Policy

The goal of the Pittsfield Department of Public Services is to remove snow and ice from our roadways as rapidly and efficiently as possible, while keeping the roads open and essential traffic moving safely. Each storm develops with different factors that include air/pavement temperatures, wind, moisture content, snow accumulation, duration and post-storm weather. With the proper use of storm forecasts, personnel, equipment and materials, the Department can return roads to safe winter conditions as soon as possible. Flexibility is needed to adapt to the variety of circumstances and conditions during each snow and ice event.

Levels of Storm Response

Although winter road conditions vary from storm to storm, we use the following four categories as a general guide for our response:

Light snow/ inclement weather: Snow accumulations of 1" or less. Generally requires salting/sanding operations only, dependent on post-storm temperatures and conditions.

Small winter storm: Snow accumulations of 1" - 3". Typically requires limited plowing, accomplished with only Highway personnel and minimal hired contractors.

Medium winter storm: Snow accumulations of 3" - 8". Requires full plowing operations with Highway personnel focused on main roads and contractors in residential streets.

Major winter storm/Blizzard: Snow accumulations of >8". Requires full plowing operations with Highway personnel focused on main roads and contractors in residential streets. These storms are typically of longer duration and will often result in 12 hours on/12 hours off shiftwork for snow personnel.

Operations

Salting/Sanding: The City is divided into 6 sanding routes that are further sub-divided into two sections – main streets (collector roads/school bus routes/hills) and residential streets. The predominant method of treating streets is with the use of straight salt, which can be used on all streets to melt the snow. When pavement temperatures are below 18° and salt loses its effectiveness, the City may use a salt mixture that has been treated with magnesium chloride; or in severe cases, a 50/50% sand/salt mixture to provide improved traction on the roadway.

Anti-Icing: Sanders are deployed two hours before the snowfall is predicted to begin in order to pre-treat the main roads with salt and prevent ice from bonding with the pavement. This is done on main roads and takes approximately 3 hours to finish the routes.

De-Icing: After snow accumulation has stopped and roads are clear of snow, post-storm de-icing operations commence to improve traction and melt remaining snow and ice. Main roads are again treated with salt, and residential streets are treated with salt or sand/salt mix as conditions warrant.

Plowing: The City has 7 large dump trucks with front and wing plows, and 3 smaller plows. The City also hires approximately 40 outside contractors each winter to assist in plowing operations. The focus for clearing roadways will be main roads first; followed by residential roads. During the storm event, the goal is to keep all streets open for emergency travel. Once the accumulation has stopped, plows will clean up the streets, and push back snow to the curb line to allow for safe travel/parking and adequate snow storage capacity for future storms. The City strives to complete the plowing within 8 hours of the end of the storm for most events. In the case of major storms, that timeline may be exceeded, up to extended operations that can last several days. Highway vehicles/staff are assigned to 6 primary routes that consist of approximately 77 miles of city-wide main and priority roads. Contractor vehicles are assigned to 31 routes that encompass the remaining residential streets, with City vehicles dispatched to assist them as necessary. The Parks Division and the Building Maintenance Department are responsible for plowing school parking lots and driveways. At the end of the storm, the Highway Division will plow City parking lots and limited sidewalks.

Plow Damage: Any plow damage occurrence must be reported to Public Services no later than May 1.

Hints for Coping with Storms:

- Avoid driving during snow emergencies to allow the snow plows to do their job. If you must be on the road, reduce your speed and drive cautiously.
- Observe all winter parking bans.
- When clearing driveways, snow should be kept on the owner's property or tree lawn/grass strip. Snow should not be deposited onto the street or sidewalk.
- It is best to pile snow to the right of the driveway (as you face the street) to reduce the potential of having it re-deposited at the driveway opening when the plow passes.
- Snow shoveling can be strenuous work. Pace yourself, use proper back technique and consider shoveling periodically during larger snow falls. If possible, help out a neighbor that might need assistance in clearing their snow.
- Rarely is the collection of trash and recyclables interrupted due to a winter storm. However, bundles of newspapers and recycling bins may become buried in the snow. If a storm is predicted, please consider keeping the recyclables for collection on your next collection day.
- Prevent street flooding by clearing catch basins near your home allowing rain or melting snow to enter the drainage system.
- Do not plow snow to obstruct a fire hydrant. Consider "adopting" a hydrant by shoveling and clearing the hydrant in your neighborhood.

City Code:

Sec. 20 -15: Throwing, etc., snow and ice into streets, etc.

No person shall throw or place, or cause to be thrown or placed, any snow or ice on or into any traveled way of any street, lane or alley in the city.

Sec. 20 – 21: Removal, etc., of snow and ice from sidewalks – Duty of occupant, etc., of abutting property to remove etc.; Chief of Police, or his or her designee, to prosecute violators.

The owner responsible for land or a building abutting a paved sidewalk, or the occupant therein, shall, after snow has ceased to fall thereupon or whenever snow shall have collected or deposited upon any such sidewalk, within 24 hours, remove the same or cause the same to be removed from such sidewalk; and also remove or cause to be removed from such sidewalk, or cover or cause to be covered with sand or some other suitable substance, within 24 hours after it has formed or appeared, any ice with which the same may be encumbered, in such was as to render such sidewalk safe and convenient for travel, to a width of 36 inches. In the event that the sidewalk has a width of less than 36 inches, the owner may only remove snow to the width of the sidewalk. If a person is found to be violating the provisions of this section, it shall be the duty of the Chief of Police, or his or her designee, the Director of Public Health, or his or her designee, and the Building Commissioner or his or her designee, to assess a fine to any such person in accordance with the fine scheduled set forth in Chapter 4 ½ entitled “Noncriminal and Criminal Enforcement,” § 4 ½ - 2.

Sec. 20 – 24: Snow emergency regulations.

Whenever impending weather conditions threaten to constitute a traffic hazard impairing transportation, the movement of food and fuel supplies, medical care, fire, health and police protection, and other vital facilities of the City, the Mayor, or, in the absence of the Mayor, his or her designee, shall declare an emergency period. Whenever such an emergency exists and the Mayor or his or her designee, shall have caused announcement by use of available news media, any or all of the following parking prohibitions shall become effective at either the time designated or upon the accumulation of three inches of snow, as measured at the Department of Public Works garage:

(a)

No driver shall stop, stand or park any vehicle within the limits of the traffic arteries or part thereof which are designated as weather or snow emergency routes by the Traffic Commission; provided, however, that this section shall not apply to passenger vehicles stopped temporarily during the actual loading or unloading of materials. All such arteries shall be identified by appropriate signage.

(b)

No vehicle shall be parked or allowed to stand on any street, which includes all public ways and all private ways which are subject to City snow removal for the duration of the snow emergency.

(c)

City off-street parking facilities shall be open and made available for parking free of charge for the duration of the snow emergency at the McKay Street parking deck and the Columbus Avenue parking deck.

(d)

Except for the designated parking facilities in Subsection (c) no person shall park or allow any vehicle registered in his or her name to park upon any land owned or controlled by the City, which shall include any land owned or controlled by any department of the City, including the School Department, after having been forbidden to do so by the person who has lawful control of said premises on behalf of the City.

(e)

During the entire month of November of each year, the City through its Police Chief shall ensure that a public service announcement program be set forth via radio, television, and newsprint to educate and inform the residents as to these regulation and the consequences of violation.

(f)

Vehicles found in violation of the provisions of this section, except those specifically exempt by law, shall be removed to a convenient place as provided in § 13-115.1 of this Code, and the owner of the vehicle so removed or towed away, shall be liable for the cost of such removal and storage, if any, within the limits set forth in § 12-117 of this Code. Neither removal nor storage of a vehicle under the provisions of this section shall be deemed to be service rendered or work performed by the City or the Police Department of the City. The contractor shall bear any and all liability to the owner of such vehicle for any damage caused to it arising out of negligence in course of such removal and storage.

Sec. 13-50: Parking prohibited in specific places

It shall be unlawful for the operator of a vehicle to park such vehicle at any time:

(7)

On the improved or paved surface of any street during the hours from 11:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. from December 1 through March 31 for the purpose of all-night parking. The Commissioner of Public Services shall have the power to designate all-night parking on any street during this period.