



Corporate Policy

Sidewalk Snow Clearing Policy – Infrastructure Services

Policy for level of service for winter control operations (snow plowing, sanding/salting and snow removal) for municipal sidewalks

Department: Infrastructure Services

Approved By Council:

1. Policy Statement

None.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish and outline a standard approach when it comes to the clearing of snow on municipal sidewalks within the Town of Orangeville. By setting out this policy we establish a clear and consistent approach on the level of services provided by the Town when it comes to the clearing of snow on municipal sidewalks within the Town of Orangeville, always keeping the safety, and best interest of taxpayers in mind.

This policy establishes guidelines and general direction for staff with respect to winter control operations for sidewalks, as well as outlines a systematic approach to providing winter control. This policy also provides direction to staff when dealing with inquiries brought forward by the public and others.

3. Definitions

None.

4. Scope

This policy sets out the level of service that Council has adopted for winter control operations for all municipal sidewalks and which it has determined to be an adequate level of service. It further establishes the discretion that is necessary and appropriate to enable the Town's Manager, Public Works, or designate, to address abnormal winter

storm events. The policy recognizes that operational decisions will need to be made based on local conditions in the field depending upon the extent and severity of a winter storm event, and as a result, there may necessarily have to be some reasonable deviations from this policy.

The amount of Town owned or rented equipment and Town personnel, and the amount of contract equipment and personnel that are required to provide this level of service may be reviewed annually through the budget process and/or may be amended by Council from time to time.

5. Policy

This policy acknowledges that winter conditions may vary and sometimes require actions outside of the Towns' standard procedures. In such cases, discretion will be exercised by Public Works staff and supporting forces to accommodate the needs of the Town to address the sidewalk snow clearing accordingly.

Trailways that act as sidewalks and are part of an integrated pedestrian network will also receive winter control measures, unless otherwise marked with a sign stating that the trailway is not maintained in the winter. These trailways will be treated in a manner similar to municipal sidewalks under this policy.

Standard Winter Control Operations

Daily weather reports may be used to plan for and schedule an appropriate response to a winter storm event.

Existing road patrols may also document unusual conditions of municipal sidewalks.

Public Works staff will use reasonable measures to ensure that adequate snow plowing and sanding equipment, complete with qualified and experienced operators, is available to provide winter control operations for the entire winter season. This will involve the use of a combination of Town and contractor equipment and personnel. The contract equipment and personnel will be available from approximately November 15th to April 15th, each winter season.

Public Works staff will begin winter control operations in the general priority sequence set out in this policy, or as directed by the Manager, Public Works, or designate, considering the start and expected duration of a winter storm event, available resource or such other criteria. Contract services may be deployed to assist Staff in winter control operations.

Depending on the expected start time and duration of a winter storm event, winter control operations will generally commence by 4:00 a.m. and end at 11:00 p.m. It is recognized that this requirement may be waived under abnormal weather conditions. (e.g., wet snow, icy conditions, etc.) Public Works staff may focus on clearing the

sidewalks that provide access to schools, and those that are in commercial areas and on the collector and arterial roads, with local roads cleared after the end of the winter storm event.

Routine patrols of all designated sidewalk routes are conducted to ensure that Town staff can consistently monitor and maintain safe conditions.

General Prioritization Criteria

The following is the general prioritization criteria for winter control operations for sidewalks:

- School and Transit routes
- Commercial areas
- Arterial roads and collector roads
- Local roads

Level of Service

Sidewalk winter control operations shall commence when snowfall accumulation has reached 8 centimeters or as directed by the Town's Manager, Public Works or the Supervisor, Operations, or their designate. This ensures that the Town is meeting or exceeding, the minimum maintenance standard set out in Ontario Regulation 239/02.

The following are considerations:

- Plowing of all sidewalks shall be targeted for completion generally within 24 hours of the winter storm event ending.
- Sidewalks are cleared/patrolled routinely throughout the entire winter season, to address any snow accumulation.
- In the event of an extreme snowstorm, which puts the public or staff at risk, a "Significant Weather Event" may be declared by the Manager, Public Works or their designate. At this time, the above timelines do not apply.
- Certain sidewalks may require more frequent maintenance due to blowing and drifting snow.

During winter control operations, a sufficient sand salt mixture shall be placed on the sidewalk. For short duration storms, with minimal snow accumulation expected, sanding/salting operations may be considered adequate. It is not an objective of this policy to provide bare conditions on all sidewalks.

Sidewalk winter control operations may be suspended, at the discretion of the Manager, Public Works, or designate, when it is unsafe for the public, the employees, or the equipment to be on the sidewalks.

Sidewalk sections with obstructions may be bypassed. Such situations may include conditions when vehicles or other obstructions make winter control operations ineffective or difficult. In so far as it is possible, the section of the sidewalk that is bypassed will be recorded and reported to the Supervisor, Operations, or designate, who will provide direction.

If health and safety concerns preclude winter control operations, operations will be suspended until health and safety concerns no longer exist.

The Town takes the following actions help reduce health and safety concerns:

- In preparation for the plowing of sidewalks for the winter season, Staff shall duly advise in writing the resident/homeowner of unsafe obstructions/features in accordance with our Maintenance and use of Boulevards By-law.
- Residents shall ensure all curbs, concrete blocks and/or driveway edging shall be flush with the ground within 450mm (18") from the edge of the sidewalk towards the house and 600 mm (24") from the edge of the sidewalk towards the road.
- All fences, posts, hedges, planters, ornaments or other such features shall be removed or relocated to provide a minimum clearance of 450mm (18") from the edge of the sidewalk towards the house and a minimum of 600 mm (24") from the edge of the sidewalk towards the road.
- Any overhanging branches or obstructions within 3.5 meters will be neatly pruned by the Town.
- Obstructions not removed by the homeowner will be removed by Town Staff or contractors at the discretion of the Supervisor, By-law, or Manager, Public Works, or their designates, and will not be reinstated.

Whenever possible, Staff will refer inappropriate parking situations to the Supervisor, Operations, or designate, who will provide direction. When practical, the license plate number of a vehicle obstructing the winter control operations shall be recorded and reported to the Supervisor, Operations, or designate, who will forward the information to the By-Law Division, as appropriate.

During equipment breakdown or other emergency situations the requirements of this policy can be amended by the Manager, Public Works, or designate, with appropriate justification.

Complaints that are received from individuals about sidewalk winter control operations will be addressed and followed up on by appropriate Public Works Staff, within the context of this policy.

Winter control operations on sidewalks may result in snow being plowed off the sidewalk onto driveways or entrances. The Town will not clear snow from private driveways or entrances.

Wherever appropriate, known incidents of damage to public and private property will be documented and reported to the Manager, Public Works, or designate who shall ensure that the incident details are forwarded to the Town's insurance adjuster, as required.

Despite Towns' staff and contractors' best-efforts, damages to boulevards (typically sod) can occur from time to time. The Town does their best to avoid this, however if damages do occur the Town using their best efforts to address locations impacted by winter operations during the off season (May 1st – September 1st) via the placement of topsoil and seed.

Minor modifications that do not change its scope may be made to this policy by the Manager, Public Works, or designate.

Summary and Conclusion

This policy outlines the Town's approach to winter control operations for the clearing of snow on sidewalks. This policy ensures a balanced level of service while allowing for flexibility in response to abnormal winter conditions. The policy emphasizes that operational decisions will be based on weather and field conditions, and discretion is given to the Manager, Public Works, or designate for managing winter storm events.

The policy aligns with the Minimum Maintenance Standards for Municipal Highways (MMS) as prescribed by the Ontario Ministry of Transportation, ensuring that all operations meet or exceed legal requirements.