

Purpose

The following Policy has been established to provide guidelines for the public and for plow operators to follow in order to ensure consistent practices for snow and ice removal during winter months. It is the goal of Carver County to have all highways under the jurisdiction of Carver County passable within a reasonable amount of time after a snowfall has stopped. The County is committed to ensure the greatest extent possible that roads are kept open to serve critical facilities and to provide access between state highways and our communities.

When unusual situations arise, the County Engineer and the Highway Maintenance Superintendent will deal with them on a case-by-case basis. Each decision to mobilize the snow plow crew is a judgment call based on the particular weather conditions. Past experience, combined with the resources available at the time, will also be factors in determining how closely this general policy will be followed.

Overview and Primary Responsibility of the Division of Public Works

Each year as the Minnesota winter approaches, the public's concern about access to work, school, and business increases. The removal of snow and ice from the roadways is an emergency operation

The Carver County Highway Maintenance Department presently operates with one main crew, consisting of Highway Maintenance employees. Each plow operator is assigned a plow route that they are to cover for the year. Back up plow operators are currently limited to employees of the Division of Public Works.

The traveling public is reminded to exercise caution and drive with care. Driving the legal speed limit may not be advisable, depending on conditions. The public is also requested **NOT TO CROWD THE PLOW**. Passing of snow removal equipment is also discouraged; plow trucks can make sudden movements that are outside of normal operation in an effort to clear snow from the roadway. In general, plows are out due to poor driving conditions, snow, slush and ice coming from plowing equipment can damage vehicles and cause reduced visibility. People who drive during the winter season will encounter snow and ice removal equipment. Flashing lights will generally be the first indication of the presence of snow removal equipment. You should reduce speed, pass with care, and keep a safe distance when encountering this equipment.

Snow Removal/Ice Control Policy

1. Dispatching of Snowplows
 - o The County, to the best of its ability, will try to maintain the roadways during snow periods. Operations will be halted when it is too hazardous for our operators and for the public or if reasonable expectations are not being met.
 - o For snow/ice activities, plows will generally be dispatched at 2 a.m., or as conditions dictate. Weekend plowing will be handled in a similar fashion.

2. Operations

- Generally, plow operations will consist of three phases: making roads passable, widening and applying chemicals, then general cleaning up.
- All roads receive equal priority for snow and ice control operations.
- Mailboxes and fences damaged during snow removal will be evaluated on a case by case basis. Only those mailboxes and fences that were properly located and installed, and which were damaged by actual contact with County equipment will be repaired at the County's expense and with only a swing away type of mail box.
- County removal of the windrow across driveways and from in front of mailboxes is not feasible and is the property owner's responsibility. Residents are reminded that it is unlawful to plow or blow snow onto or across County highways.
- Residents must remove parked vehicles from County highways to assist in snow removal.
- Carver County personnel may assist stranded motorists by contacting law enforcement/emergency personnel. The Public Works Division will not attempt to remove stuck vehicles unless directed by law enforcement personnel to eliminate a safety hazard.
- Carver County snow plow operators will be pulled from the road based on a number of factors:
 1. Roads are clear.
 2. Length of shift.
 3. Hazardous conditions.
 4. Forecasted weather conditions.

3. Emergencies

- For plowing for emergencies, the public should contact the Sheriff's Office. During snow emergency's, Carver County Plows will not be dispatched from regular plow routes or called for extra duty unless it is an actual emergency coordinated through the Sheriff's Office. This provision is necessary to ensure that other emergency fire, medical, or law enforcement services are available to all residents of Carver County and to maintain efficiency of snow and ice operations.

Operational Goals

The Carver County Public Works Division continually reviews our operations and research new methods to find the most economical ways of controlling snow and ice on County Highways.

The operational goals are:

1. Make the roads passable within 4 hours of the end of the snow event.
 - Clean one lane in each direction. This usually involves the placement of chemicals.
2. Widen the lanes to edge of shoulders and apply chemicals.
 - The County does not assure a completely bare road within a specified timeline.
 - During a continuous snow fall, the County will perform sanding operations at problem areas, including: curves, hills, intersections, and bridges.
3. Deicing

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- Using Salt, Treated Salt, and Sand mixed with Salt or Treated Salt, and Liquid deicers are all used to achieve substantially bare pavement.
- 4. Clean up.
 - Remove ice and slush off roadway after chemicals have been allowed to work.
 - Re apply chemicals to areas that need additional attention.
- 5. End of operations
 - Operations will be halted when: (a) all lanes are substantially bare pavement (b) crews have completed their route after the termination of the snowfall, (c) conditions are too hazardous for safe operation.
- 6. Non-Storm days-
 - Patrolling for drifting, frost issues, and snow removal from accumulated locations will be prioritized as the needs arise.
- 7. Snow Removal
 - On occasion the county determines the need or cities and townships request snow be removed from Carver County Right of Way, the county will require the cities and townships to provide: (a) a dump site to deposit snow, (b) to remove snow from city sidewalks, trails and boulevards, (c) provide assistance in hauling when available.
- 8. Use of Technology
 - Carver County will strive to use the latest technology to optimize snow and ice control. AVL (automated vehicle location) provides management the ability to track locations for closest vehicle response, route run times to maximize efficiency and material use.
 - MDSS (management decision support system) Carver County uses the MN DOT MDSS system to assist in the decision making process on best practices for snow and ice control. This system uses forecast, current road conditions and desired result to allow Highway Maintenance to be proactive instead of reactive to snow and ice.