

City of Northfield, Minnesota	Policy Number: 1.05
PUBLIC WORKS (STREET DIVISION)	Adopted: 9/18/2018 – Motion 2018-098
SNOW AND ICE CONTROL POLICY	Revised:

## 1.05 SNOW AND ICE CONTROL POLICY

### A. PURPOSE

The City of Northfield finds that it is in the best interest of the City to assume basic responsibility for control of snow and ice on City streets.

Reasonable snow and ice control is necessary for the traveling public, movement of goods and services, and emergency services. The City will provide such control in a safe and cost-effective manner, keeping in mind public safety, budget, personnel and environmental concerns. The City will use City employees and equipment and/or private contractors to provide this service.

The City asks that the general public also assume a certain responsibility for themselves and others when walking or operating a motor vehicle in less than ideal conditions. Plowing and chemical treatment of the streets and sidewalks/trails does not remove every hazardous condition related to winter travel.

### B. PROCEDURE

The City of Northfield performs snow plowing, snow removal, ice control and associated winter maintenance on the local City streets (74 center lane miles), portions of MnDOT TH 19, TH 3 and TH 246 (7.35 center lane miles), portions of CSAH 28 and CSAH 43 (5.35 center lane miles), sidewalks adjacent to City property, bituminous trails (31.3 miles) and municipal parking lots.

Under normal conditions, the goal is to have all City streets plowed curb-to-curb approximately 12 hours after cessation of a snow event. The actual completion of plowing may exceed the 12 hours based on the timing, amount of snowfall, blowing and drifting, and/or equipment breakdown.

Snow removal in the Downtown area is performed within 24 hours after the completion of the plowing operation.

Initial trail clearing focuses on areas near schools and City facilities. Remaining trails are cleared within 48 to 72 hours after the cessation of snowfall. The City does not clear all sidewalks/trails to bare pavement.

During normal work hours (Monday – Friday, 7:00 AM – 3:30 PM). The Streets and Parks Supervisor shall be responsible for monitoring streets, sidewalks and weather conditions. The initiation of snow and ice control and removal shall begin as directed by the Supervisor.

After hours, weekends or holidays the Streets and Parks Supervisor shall work in conjunction with the Police Department to keep abreast of road and/or weather conditions, which would require commencement of snow and ice control. Only the Streets and Parks Supervisor, the Streets and Parks Manager or the Public Works Director is authorized to call out staff for snow and ice control operations.

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- Police Department personnel is authorized to call out staff for minor deicing or other minor maintenance issues.

### **C. OPERATIONS**

The City is equally broken down into four snow plowing districts. Snow and ice control operations for each district are prioritized based on street classification as indicated below.

- First Priority – Arterial and Collector Streets
- Second Priority – Commercial Streets
- Third Priority – Residential Streets
- Fourth Priority – Cul-de-sacs and Parking Lots

The City does not clear all streets to bare pavement.

Plowing will not normally begin until a minimum of two inches of snow has accumulated on the streets. Plowing may begin earlier; however, that decision is made based on the severity of the winter event. The timing of plowing depends on the severity of weather, cessation of snowfall and personnel.

Snowplow operations require multiple passes in order to clear the snow from the streets. As a result, residents can expect plows to pass in front of each home at least twice. The first pass will be to move the snow from the center of the road toward the edges. The second pass will move the snow off the street and onto the boulevard.

Snow plowing on State and County roads within the city limits of Northfield is performed by a combination of City and State/County resources. The extent of plowing is detailed in the maintenance agreements between MNDOT and Rice County.

Downtown (defined as the area encompassing 2nd Street to 7th Street and Water Street to Washington Street) snow removal is normally performed the first morning after all streets have been plowed. For example, if plowing is completed by 11:00 Wednesday morning, downtown snow removal will begin late Wednesday evening/early Thursday morning. Areas of snow removal include sidewalks, roads, and public parking lots. Downtown property owners are not authorized to push their parking lot snow into the street. All downtown snow removal is performed late evening and early morning to reduce the impact to businesses and the citizens living and working downtown.

### **D. SNOW EMERGENCY**

A snow emergency may be declared when at least two inches of snow has fallen. The emergency exists because of snow or other winter related conditions creating a hazardous road

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condition or impedes the movement of fire, health, police, emergency or other vehicle traffic. The goal of the announcement is to clear vehicles from streets to allow the safe and effective removal of snow and ice. Additionally, the snow emergency restricts parking in city-owned lots in the downtown area. The snow emergency remains in effect for 72 hours.

No parking is allowed on City streets until the snow emergency has expired or the street has been plowed curb to curb, even if the precipitation has stopped.

Vehicles parked in violation of a snow emergency will be tagged and towed at the owner’s expense.

**City-issued winter parking permits do not allow parking on the street during a snow emergency.**

The City of Northfield publicizes the declaration of a snow emergency in multiple locations.

- City of Northfield website, [www.ci.northfield.mn.us](http://www.ci.northfield.mn.us)
- City of Northfield snow emergency hotline – 507-645-3080
- City of Northfield Facebook Page
- The Northfield News, [www.southernminn.com/northfield\\_news](http://www.southernminn.com/northfield_news)
- KYMN radio, 1080 AM, 95.1 FM, <http://kymnradio.net>
- Sign-up for Snow Emergency Alerts on the City of Northfield website, [www.ci.northfield.mn.us](http://www.ci.northfield.mn.us)

#### E. RESIDENT INFORMATION

The City of Northfield responds to snow removal issues on a complaint driven basis. Residents having concerns about snow plowing/removal or ice control should contact the Streets and Parks Department at 507-645-3050. The Supervisor will respond to complaints within 48 hours.

The City of Northfield reminds all residents and snow removal operators that it is unlawful, under Minnesota Statute 160.2715, to deposit snow onto public roadways. This includes snow left on the roadway as a plow or snow blower enters or leaves a driveway. Piles of snow deposited onto public roadways may re-freeze and create a significant hazard to the travelling public and future snow removal operations. Other hazards created by improper placement of snow on or near a public roadway include drainage problems, drifting, sight obstruction and safe accessibility. Violations are considered a misdemeanor, and civil penalties may apply if the placement of snow creates a hazard that contributes to a motor vehicle crash and or pedestrian injury. The civil liability can extend to both the property owner and the person who places the snow.

Sod damaged during snow plowing operations will be repaired the following spring. The Streets and Parks Department will repair the damage using black dirt and grass seed.

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The City of Northfield accepts no responsibility for items placed or damaged on the City right-of-way. These items might be plantings, fences, landscape boulders, timbers, stakes, sprinkler systems, posts, improperly placed mailboxes, and miscellaneous loose items.

The City of Northfield will plow as close as possible to the curb to allow for mail delivery. It shall be the responsibility of the property owner to keep snow away from mailboxes so mail can be delivered.

- If damage occurs to a mailbox, the Streets and Parks Supervisor shall investigate such damage. If it is determined that that weight of the snow caused the damage, the City of Northfield will not assume responsibility for repair of the mailbox. If evidence shows that there was physical contact with the snowplow the City of Northfield shall provide a \$65.00 payment to the property owner to replace. A limited number of temporary mailboxes are available; however, residents should make every effort to replace their mailboxes as soon as possible.
- Mailboxes that do not comply with MN Statute 169.072, MN Rule 8818 and the United States Postal Service (USPS) specifications will relieve the City from any liability.

Damage caused to driveway aprons from snow plowing will be investigated by the City to determine if the damage was caused by plowing operations.

By City Ordinance (Ch. 70 Article I, §70-2) property owners are responsible for removing snow and ice from the sidewalks adjacent to their property within 12 hours after snow or ice precipitation has stopped. If snow and ice are not removed, authorized City personnel may remove it, and the costs for snow removal will be assessed against the property. Residents may report snow/ice covered sidewalks to the Community Development Department (507-645-3044).

Efficient snow plowing requires that garbage and recycling containers not be placed on the street. The containers shall be placed off the street to allow for snow plowing and snow removal operations. The containers may have to be placed at the end of the driveway or in the yard to meet these requirements. It is the property owner’s responsibility to see that the containers are accessible for pickup but not in the way for snow plowing operations.

Fire hydrants are critical to minimize the potential loss caused from fire. After snow plowing operations or major buildup of snow around the hydrant, citizens are encouraged to clear a 5-foot area around the hydrant to allow the Fire Department access.

The City of Northfield implements a winter parking ban on all City streets between the hours of 2:00AM and 6:00AM ([Municipal Code Ch. 78, Article IV, § 78-102](#)). The parking ban is in effect from November 15 to March 15. Any vehicles parked on the street at any time of day during a declared [Snow Emergency](#) may be towed ([Municipal Code Ch. 78, Article IV, § 78-101](#)).

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The City offers Parking Permits during the Winter Parking Ban to residents. These winter parking permits do not allow on-street parking during a Snow Emergency. Interested parties must apply for the permit each year and the application must be approved by the Chief of Police or designated representative. Permit applications can be obtained from the City of Northfield website or the Engineering Office at City Hall. It is important that applicants provide a detailed explanation of the circumstances that justify a hardship for a permit to be issued. Permits fall into one of three categories explained below.

- Downtown parking permits are limited to downtown apartments that do not have off-street parking. The downtown winter parking permit allows those residents to park in certain city parking lots during a declared snow emergency. It does not exempt downtown residents from normal city parking regulations. Property owners are responsible for getting permits and parking instructions to their tenants. Downtown residents have an obligation to be knowledgeable of parking regulations and cognizant of announced snow removal operations, which may require the relocation of their vehicle.
- On-street parking permits allow residents to park on the street during the Winter Parking Ban as long as a snow emergency has not been declared. Applications must be submitted to the City for approval each year. These permits are intended to cover extenuating circumstances for residential properties that do not have adequate off-street parking. Holders of on-street permits must remove vehicles from the streets during a declared snow emergency.
- Temporary on-street parking permits allow on-street parking for short periods (up to two weeks) to accommodate visitors, construction projects, etc. These permits will have a specific start and end date. Holders of temporary on-street permits must remove vehicles from the street during a declared snow emergency. Residents may call the Police Department (507-645-4477) if they will have a visitor for two nights or less.

**F. LIMITATIONS**

While the City fully intends to meet the guidelines established in this policy, there may be times when this is not feasible. Issues including, but not limited to, budget constraints, critical equipment failure, weather, or other emergencies may prevent the City from meeting the guidelines established herein.

**G. EFFECTIVE DATE OF POLICY**

This Policy will be effective as of September 18, 2018. Modifications of the Policy will be effective on the date said modifications are approved by the City Council.