



# Turner Public Works Department

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## PUBLIC RELATIONS IN WINTER UNDERSTANDING SNOW AND ICE CONTROL OPERATIONS

To the citizens of Turner,

The following is an overview of the Town of Turner's preparation and operational plan for the winter season. We have been busy preparing for the winter season that has now arrived. This includes plow repair and painting, chemical spreader calibration, servicing equipment, mixing of salt and sand, plow route review, and assigning levels of service to each roadway within the town. Provisions contained in this document may be updated and reviewed as conditions change.

It is our goal to remove snow and ice as rapidly and efficiently as possible from town streets. Safety and mobility of the community is of utmost importance and many times a Herculean effort is needed to reach this goal. The Turner Public Works Department takes pride in clearing our streets and is dedicated to performing in a professional manner. Each storm is different and presents challenges that can be very difficult to handle. Such things as temperature, time of day, traffic conditions, rate of precipitation (freezing rain, snow, sleet) are just a few factors affecting the impact of the storm. Total snowfall is of course, one of those factors. However, depth alone can be a deceptive yardstick. For instance, a small storm during the weekday rush hour can cause havoc, while the same storm on the weekend or late at night may cause little trouble. Light snow and heavy wind will cause continual drifting and ice formation. Heavy wet snow and sleet will pack on roadways and bring trees and power lines down causing additional problems. Snow turning to rain can cause a pyramid of issues including street flooding. By far the most dangerous condition of all is freezing rain/icing. Many times it takes an extreme amount of time in these types of conditions to get chemicals and sand on roads. Trucks must travel at an extremely low rate of speed and in many cases, a much smaller vehicle must be used to travel in front of the large sander so it does not slide off the road. This is time consuming but necessary to protect the workers from injury and the equipment from damage.

At the end of the season there is nothing to show for this great expense. No new infrastructure improvements, yet it would be unthinkable not to make every effort to clean our streets as rapidly as possible.

### PLOW ROUTES:

The town is broken down into sections or routes. Each truck is assigned certain streets. There are seven plow routes within the town's 60 plus square mile area. We plow 90-center line miles or 180 lane miles of roads in Turner.

### LEVELS OF SERVICE:

It is impossible to maintain a snow and ice-free roadway during a storm. It is the intention of the public

works department to provide practical, safe access along town streets and municipal facilities during winter storms. The department shall strive to achieve bare pavement three and one half feet either side of the centerline of all priority roads as soon as possible. All operational decisions regarding applications of salt and sand, and scheduling of plow cycles will be based on this goal.

During this process after the storm, you may observe slush on the roadways. This is a normal condition that occurs after deicing materials have been applied. After a predetermined time which depends upon traffic flow and temperature, we will plow off the accumulation and repeat the process if necessary to achieve our previously stated goal. Please use caution when you encounter these conditions. Many people think that the roadway has not been plowed. However, that is not the case and we strive to not let the build up get to a point that it creates a dangerous condition. However to despite our best efforts this can and does happen on occasions. It is important to adjust your driving to the conditions at hand. Most all traffic accidents during bad weather conditions are the failure of the operator to adjust to the driving conditions and reduce speed.

We do not use straight salt. We use a mixture of 7 parts sand to one and a half parts salt. Therefore our roads will not "bare up" as quickly as State Route 4 and other routes the state plows, as the state has designated these roads as a salt priority. (Use of straight salt)

It is our policy to begin snow and ice operations upon accumulation of one inch of wet snow and two inches of dry snow. The public works director may begin the operations sooner or later depending upon other factors such as freezing rain, sleet, ect.

#### PRIORITIES:

As explained earlier, the highest levels of service are given to the main roads that have the highest traffic levels. The lowest priority roadways are the very rural roadways.

#### OTHER PRIORITYS ARE;

- Public safety facilities
- Hills and other dangerous intersections
- Municipal parking lots
- Dry hydrants (after the storm)

#### CYCLE TIMES: (how long it takes a plow to complete its route)

Cycle times will vary depending upon conditions. Rural roads will have longer cycle times than high traffic priority roads. Most cycle times are between 1-2 hours. This will increase depending upon the rate of snow fall and the between the hours of 10pm-4am by as much as 2-4 hours. All of the workers myself included work until the job is complete. This can and many times does involve many hours with out rest or sleep. Please be patient. If you have a request or concern call the public works line (225-3477) we check for messages frequently, or town hall, if open. If you have an emergency call 911.

The policy outlined above is to serve as a general overview of the normal policy operating procedures for winter maintenance one or more of the following, which may effect or delay the normal operating procedures of this policy:

- Equipment break down.
- Snow accumulation in excess of 1" per hour
- Freezing rain or other icing conditions
- Extreme storm conditions (blizzards, snow accumulations in excess of 12 inches)
- Traffic conditions
- Emergencies

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

- 1) Why is my street always plowed last and what are town priorities? As explained earlier, the highest levels of service are given to high traffic roadways. Rural roads and lower traffic volume roads will be cleared less often. Other priorities are; public safety facilities, hills and dangerous intersections, school facilities, municipal facilities, and dry hydrants (after the storm).
- 2) Why is it that I see snowplows and sander trucks going past my house that are not plowing or sanding? These trucks are driving to their designated routes or to and from the sand/salt shed. If they begin sanding plowing before reaching their route, they will not have enough sand to complete their own route, and early plowing would delay them from getting to their own assigned route. Also, if plowing on someone else's route, they will not know what part of the cycle the roadway is in and may well be a waste as they might plow off sand and salt that has just been put down.
- 3) Why does the plow fill up my driveway? Snowplow drivers do not intentionally fill driveways when plowing a roadway. The snow from the dust pan (front plow) and wing go along existing snow banks. However, gaps such as driveways will inevitably be filled with snow during this process. Waiting to shovel until the end of the storm will help minimize the need for repeated shoveling. If you can't wait, put the snow that is moved to the end of the driveway on the downward side of the approach of the plow. This will help to minimize the amount of snow that goes into your driveway. If the street is plowed clean and full width, and it has stopped snowing, you are safe. If not, the plowing operation is not finished and you will see that dreaded plow again. Do not throw snow out into the roadway. Not only is this illegal, you create a formidable traffic hazard. You could be held liable should someone be hurt because of your actions, especially if the town has finished its plowing operations. Have some regards for your fellow citizens and the motoring public and don't expose yourself unnecessarily.

11/4/2002, Snow Plowing Policy Town of Turner: Effective from November 1<sup>st</sup> each year or the first snow accumulation through April 30<sup>th</sup> each year or the last snowstorm of the season, no vehicle shall be left in the road limits so as to interfere with snow plowing operations. Any vehicle found in violation of this policy may be towed. If subject to towing, the Town hauler shall remain harmless of all liability and/or any and all damages done to the vehicle.

Enforcement of this policy may be conducted through a Law Enforcement Officer, the Road Commissioner, and/or the Highway Foreman. A reasonable effort shall be made to locate a responsible party to move the subject vehicle. However, it shall remain the sole discretion of the enforcement party as to when the subject vehicle is to be towed. This policy shall exempt emergency situations, such as accidents, ambulance calls, fires, or similar emergency situations. Vehicles with mechanical failures, flat tires, ect., shall be removed at the owner's expense as quickly as possible to allow public works crews to effectively and efficiently remove snow from the roadways. PER ORDER OF THE TURNER BOARD OF SELECTMEN.

NOTE TO TURNER RESIDENTS: It is illegal to plow snow across a public street. This can create a serious safety issue within the road limits. The Road Commissioner will be reviewing such incidents and may recommend law enforcement involvement for these infractions. Please respect your Public Works Crews efforts in plowing your town streets and other members of the motoring public when moving snow from your driveways.

## 4) MAIL BOXES:

Mailboxes installed in the town right of way are placed at the OWNERS RISK. A large highway plow and wing moves many tons of snow widening roadways. The rolling action of the snow will destroy all

but the strongest and properly placed mail boxes and posts. The Town of Turner has a long standing policy that it will not replace or pay for any mail box or post placed within its right of way that has been damaged or destroyed by snow removal operations. We will look at any situation in the cases where the box or post has been physically hit by the plow vehicle. Please see suggested methods of placing mailboxes at the end of this section.

#### 5) WINTER SAND:

Winter sand/salt mix is available for Turner residents only at the transfer station during normal business hours. The sand /salt shed are off limits at all times except for employees. You are allowed two five gallon buckets per storm. We do not allow straight salt to be taken.

The following are recommendations relative to safe operation of vehicles in snowstorms.

- Make certain your vehicle is ready for winter driving conditions long before the first storm hits. Being ready means good tires, good wiper blades, a properly working defroster, a small pail of sand in the trunk and a well made ice scraper.
- Reduce your speed in snow and ice conditions. This is the #1 cause of most accidents. People have actually tried to pass a sander or plow on many occasions some with disastrous results. Many areas in town are subject to sudden freeze over conditions and catch many motorists unaware. Hills, bad intersections and bridges, can be especially dangerous.
- At the beginning of each storm the public works employees must also drive in icy conditions to reach the equipment needed. This cannot be done quickly.
- Only travel when absolutely necessary.
- When a storm is forecast please remove your vehicles from roadsides. Do not wait until the last minute.
- The Town does not plow private streets, driveways or mailboxes. During snow and ice conditions, calls from fire and police officials regarding accidents, medical or other emergency situations are given top priority. Upon request of the appropriate agency, the Public Works Department will provide assistance as necessary. Because of the high priority assigned to snow and ice control, most other public works operations/projects become secondary to snow fighting operations.
- As previously stated, the goal of the Turner Public Works Department to remove snow and ice from our roadways as rapidly and efficiently as possible while keeping roads open and essential traffic moving. This does not mean bare, dry pavement should be expected after each snowstorm. The aim of snow and ice control operations is to return road surfaces to normal winter conditioned as soon as feasible within the limitations of this policy and our limited resources. With proper use of forecasts, personnel, equipment, and materials, the desired result can usually be obtained. However, flexibility is needed to adapt to the variety of circumstances and conditions during a winter weather event.
- As previously stated, clearing snow and ice from Turner's public roadways, municipal facilities, and school lots is a formidable task. It requires the coordination and oversight of equipment, personnel and many other things. The hours can be extremely long, with operations taking place under the most severe weather and driving conditions. We realize that in an operation such as this that there are bound to be complaints or requests for additional service. Please when calling, state your name, the nature of your call, and your contact information. We will not be able to respond or get back to you unless that information is supplied. The dedicated Public Works phone line is 225-

3477 during storm situations or after hours. We check the messages often. During regular business hours please call the town office. If you get no response they may have closed due to weather conditions and call the Public Works line. If you need immediate response (emergency situations only) please call 911.

- This policy is intended to be a guide as to how the Public Works Department will fight snow and ice storms. As previously stated many things can effect or delay all or parts of this policy. Many times during major storm/ severe winter weather events, changes need to be made to address unforeseen conditions or emergencies. Winter storms can be trying on all of us, motorists, residents and snowplow operators alike. Please have patience during these types of conditions and exercise common sense so all of us can get through the winter season safely.
- We hope this information has been helpful to you. Should you have any questions please call us @ 225-3477. We will be happy to answer any questions or concerns you may have. We also welcome any citizen input or suggestions. Thank you.

John W. Moultrie  
Public Works Director/Road Commissioner  
Town of Turner