

TOWN OF WARREN  
ROAD DEPARTMENT

WINTER ROAD MAINTENANCE POLICY

The Warren Road Department's Winter Maintenance Policy is based on the goal of obtaining safe highway travel surfaces during winter months. It is our goal to achieve this at the earliest practical time and in the most cost efficient manner during and after a storm event. Providing bare dry travel surfaces during a winter storm event is not practical and therefore not expected.

There are many variables affecting winter maintenance operations such as type of precipitation, air and pavement temperature, traffic volume, wind, time of day, and even the day of the week. Type and volume of traffic and road gradient are the primary factors in determining the order of winter maintenance service. Therefore, during periods of time when school is in session, top priority is given to clearing roads utilized by the school buses.

Emergency service buildings shall receive necessary maintenance to provide for emergency personnel to arrive and for vehicles to depart and return safely. As necessary, snow and ice control equipment shall be redirected by the Road Foreman from assigned routes to assist emergency response vehicles in reaching the destination. Roads heavily used by commuters and hills are next in priority.

Each winter storm event is unique. It is impractical to develop specific rules on winter maintenance operations. Therefore, the judgment of the Road Foreman often governs the quantities and type of applications used to control snow and ice. Public safety is always our top priority.

The following are general guidelines for the winter maintenance by the Warren Road Department:

**Highway Department Call Outs:**

Road Department's regular working hours are 6 a.m. - 2:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. All Road Department employees are standby 24 hours per day, 7 days per week from October 15th through May 1. In the event of a winter storm that occurs during evening or weekend hours, the Road Foreman will make the decision to mobilize in consultation with whoever else in the Road Department is on call and

with other transportation emergency service officials as he sees fit. The determination will be based on the time of day, condition of roads, and the predicted duration and the intensity of the storm.

### **Plowing Operations:**

Plowing operations are generally initiated after 2 to 4 inches of snow have fallen and may continue until the storm has concluded. It is expected that each plow route will take 4 hours or less to complete.

For light accumulation snowfalls and snow squalls plowing may begin immediately and may include simultaneous salting and/or sanding to provide the desired results quickly and efficiently. Snow squalls, which occur after 10 p.m. and produce only a light accumulation, may not require immediate attention because of light traffic. Such light accumulation may be cleared very early the following morning, no later than 5:00 a.m. This will be at the discretion of the Road Foreman.

Excessive overtime hours for Highway Department workers are also a consideration. State of Vermont guidelines for highway departments require employees to have at least four hours rest after a 16-hour shift. During a prolonged storm event we will clear all of the roads and intersections but we may not apply sand until after a four hour or longer rest period. Hills, intersections, and curves may be done before our shift ends, depending on their condition. Widening and intersection view clearing is performed following the storm, and generally during daylight hours.

### **Guidelines for the Town's Right-of-Way:**

The Town will pursue recovery for damages if town equipment is damaged by objects placed in the right of way. Pursuant to Vermont state statute, title 23, chapter 13, section 1126a - no person shall place (or cause to be placed) snow or ice within the Town's right of way for any reason.

During maintenance operations of any season, the Town of Warren will not be responsible for any damage or destruction of appurtenances placed within the Town's right of way. Appurtenances include, but are not limited to: a tree, shrubs, flowers, grass, fences, stonewalls, and stone posts. It is the Town's policy to use special care and consideration when plowing in the vicinity of mailbox supports.

Despite this care and consideration, some mailboxes may be damaged or destroyed during the snow removal season. In the vast majority of cases, it is the weight of the snow coming off the plow or wing blade that damages a mailbox, especially when oncoming traffic makes it impossible for the plow operator to swerve around the support. It is the Town's policy to replace or repair a mailbox and support that was in good condition and meet postal regulations that were damaged as a direct result of Town snowplowing operations. This does not include damage caused by the snow coming off of the plow or wing blade.

**(See Warren rural mailbox placement specifications below).**

The replacement of a mailbox or support does not take priority over snow plowing, sanding, salting and other high priority winter maintenance operations and a postal customer may have to pick up mail at the Post Office until the mailbox is back in place. The Town shall have no responsibility for clearing away snow from the entrances of private driveways that accumulates as a result of highway plowing operations.

#### **Rural mailbox placement specifications:**

The Town of Warren requires rural mailboxes to be mounted on a steel pipe 1-1/2" inside diameter or larger, 4x4 nominal wooden post, or a standard of equivalent strength, set at least 2-1/2 feet into the ground. The leading edge of the mailbox itself should be between 2-1/2 and 3 feet outside of the pavement of the regularly travelled surface of a gravel road. The bottom of the box should be between 48 and 50 inches above the surface of the adjacent roadway. Adherence to these specifications will be required prior to any assistance the Town of Warren may provide to repair or replace any rural mailbox damage as a consequence of its' winter road maintenance service.

#### **Salt Applications:**

Salt is used to reduce adherence of snow to pavement thereby improving the ability of snowplows to remove it from the road surface. It is the position of the Town of Warren Highway Department that salt combined with snowplowing is the safest, most efficient de-icing method available. It is the policy of the Department to use only sufficient salt to restore safe travel conditions after a storm. It will be applied to pave roads with a minimum amount of sand applied as necessary. Salt is not effective when the road temperatures are below 10 degrees.

## **Sand Application:**

Sand is utilized to obtain the goal of safe travel surface on gravel roads following a storm. Generally sand is applied after the conclusion of plowing operations. Sand will also be applied to pave surfaces, and as with salt. It will be used conservatively so that only an amount sufficient to restore safe travel conditions after a storm is used. Some particles may be as large as  $\frac{3}{4}$ " in size and may cause windshield or other types of damage. Travelers should use caution and avoid following other vehicles or town trucks too closely. The Town will not pay for any vehicle damage such as replacement windshields, alleged to be caused by application of salt and sand to road surfaces.

## **Ice and Freezing Rain:**

Frozen precipitation, including sleet and the build-up of ice caused by freezing rain, is a special situation, and not subject to the procedures indicated above. For example, when a changeover from snow to sleet to freezing rain is predicted or anticipated, snow and/or sleet may be left on the pavement to capture the freezing rain.

## **Parking:**

Parking is not allowed along roadsides or in public areas from November 1st to April 30th from 1:00 a.m. to 8:00 a.m. (See Warren parking ordinance currently in effect). Vehicles will be removed at the expense of the owner.

## **Generally:**


Judgment based on experience is essential in conducting and timing remedial work to overcome winter hazards. To this end, the Town's Road Foreman enforces this policy and is given wide-ranging latitude for dealing with winter weather situations as they are occurring. Evaluation of methods used and their effectiveness may be made by the Director of Public Works at the conclusion of the event. These evaluations will be based on personal observations and input from the general public. The goal of these evaluations will be to provide direction to the Road Foreman for similar events in the future.

Once adopted, this policy supersedes any and all other highway maintenance policies whether written or otherwise.

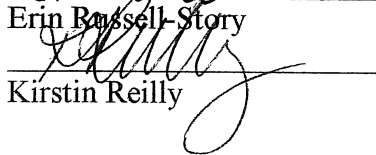
Adopted: 9 Dec. 2008

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