

# Snow Clearing Policy

## RM of Spiritwood No. 496

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Applies to: Public Works  
Responsibility: Foreman  
Revised: May 13, 2019

### **Purpose**

The RM of Spiritwood, within the resources allocated by RM Council, will clear and/or remove snow and ice, as necessary on municipal roadways in accordance with this policy.

### **Background**

The RM of Spiritwood No. 496 maintains approximately 400 miles of municipal roads during the winter, in addition to Mildred, Bapaume, Ranger, the Organized Hamlet of Spruce Bay, The Cove, South Shore Ridge, Aspen Ridge Estates, Green Jewel Estates, Angus Estates, Sunset Rim Estates & Misty Grove. In order to reasonably meet the public's expectations the following policy will apply:

The following policy has been established by Council to provide guidelines for the Public Works Department staff to follow in order to ensure consistent practices for snow removal.

**\*Some variation in the plan may be necessary as special snow conditions may arise.\***

### **Hours of Operation**

Snow clearing/removal operations will only begin once the snowfall has ended or is expected to shortly, and visibility is greater than 300 meters. In cases where the snow fall ends the evening before or during the night, snow clearing operations will begin the following morning or as according to policy. Public works employees and equipment will be dispatched or put on standby according to the Public Works Foreman or his designates discretion upon review of meteorological forecasts and other factors such as wind velocity and direction. During extreme snowfall events where the snowfall amount and/or accompanying severe drifting conditions makes it impractical to complete the snow clearing operations with a full complement of resources and continuous effort, the time limits specified may be extended.

### **Snowfall**

a) Level 1: Snowfall amounts of less than 5cm.

This does not require a full snow clearing operation, although some minor clearing might be done at the Foreman's or his designates discretion. Ice control may be necessary within some rural areas, depending on various factors including: temperature, forecast, wind conditions, traffic volumes, etc.

b) Level 2: Snowfall amounts of 5cm up to 15cm (accumulative)

Snow clearing/removal will be begin on the first regular work day following the snowfall. Snow removal shall be done in order of priority within each respective area.

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c) Level 3: Snowfall amounts of 15cm or more

Snow clearing/removal will be initiated shortly after snowfall has ceased. In situations where snowfall ends late in the day or evening, snow clearing operations shall commence the following morning. Snow clearing/removal shall be done in order of priority within each respective area.

After a major storm, cleanup operations will be on going for multiple days. In the event of a severe storm where it is deemed necessary that additional equipment will be required, the Municipality may hire individual contractors to assist the Municipality in clearing the roads in a timely manner. While it is acknowledged that voluntary assistance is sometimes provided by general ratepayers or contractors in the event of a storm event, **ONLY** those contractors or individuals that are contacted and approved by the Municipalities Foreman or designate will be financially compensated.

### **Route Determination**

When snow clearing is required, the entire route is done in the most efficient order. Public works employees shall follow OH&S regulations for hours of work. Operations will be halted when:

- (a) service levels have been reached;
- (b) coverage time has elapsed;
- (c) conditions are too hazardous, or
- (d) reasonable accomplishments cannot be made.

The road and route determination will be decided on by the Public Works Department. The roads will be cleared according to a route that allows the public works employees to complete the route with minimal amount of backtracking. Therefore, some minor roads may be plowed first in order to provide the most efficient plowing schedule. Any road that has historically not been plowed will continue to remain unmaintained during the winter months. Many factors will be considered when determining road adequacy including: school bus routes, major arteries, average daily traffic, availability of alternate routes, residential properties and maintainability during typical and atypical conditions.

### **Vacant Residential Properties**

The RM of Spiritwood No. 496 public works employees will provide snow removal on all municipal roads that provide access to an assessed, non-vacant residence or a daily agricultural or commercial operation.

A daily agriculture or commercial operation is described as an operation that requires infrastructure, utilities and daily site visits by employees or owners.

Swath grazing, bale grazing and/or access to grain storage does not qualify as a daily farming operation.

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Any request for snow clearing/removal on non-maintained municipal roads and/or private property will only be done on the following conditions:

- The person requesting the snow removal must sign and submit a custom work request form and the regular hourly custom rate will apply; and
- The snow removal request must be located on property accessed by a maintained municipal road;

The request to clear snow will be at the discretion of the foreman or his designate.

Although efforts will be made to alleviate the amount of snow pushed in to driveways and entrances, it will be the resident's responsibility for the clearing of windrowed snow and ice to the degree that vehicular and pedestrian traffic is not compromised. The RM devotes a great deal of resources to keep the roads clear of snow and ice. Residents often deposit snow, slush and ice from their property onto the roadways not realizing that this contravenes municipal regulations and contributes to unsafe driving conditions and increases the cost of providing winter road maintenance. Please be reminded that this creates unsafe conditions for both drivers and public utilities attempting to clear roads as well as extra time and unnecessary expense are created by such actions. Please find a suitable location for snow within the confines of the property being cleared." It is a violation of this policy to move snow, slush or ice from private properties onto or across public roadways.

### **Stranded Motorists**

Public works employees may assist stranded motorists in certain circumstances. Public works employees will not attempt to remove a stuck vehicle unless approved by the Foreman (or his designate). If the public works employee is approved to assist the stranded vehicle, the public works employee should ensure that the stranded motorist is responsible for hooking up the towing rope to his own vehicle to limit any potential liability.

### **Summary of the Policy**

This policy has been developed to provide general guidelines for both municipal personnel and the travelling public. This policy intends to cover the majority of situations normally encountered in winter storm events. If certain situations arise that are not part of the above policy, the municipal Foreman will deal with them on a case by case basis. Each decision to mobilize the snowplow crew is a judgment call based on the particular weather conditions combined with the past experience along with the resources available at the time and therefore may not adhere strictly to this general policy.