

TOWN OF WINHALL WINTER ROAD MAINTENANCE POLICY

The Town of Winhall Winter Road Maintenance Policy is based on the objective of obtaining safe highway travel surfaces during winter months. The goal is 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 should not be 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 school busses.

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 destinations. Roads heavily used by commuters and hills are the next 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 types of applications used to control snow and ice. Public safety is always top priority.

Highway Department Call-Outs:

The Highway Department's regular working hours are 6:00AM to 2:00PM, Monday through Friday from May 1 to October 31. All Highway Department employees are on standby twenty-four (24) hours per day, seven (7) days per week from November 1 through April 30. 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 members of the Select Board, others in the Department, other Town employees, and with emergency service officials as he sees fit. The determination will be based on the time of day, the condition of the roads, and the predicted duration and 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 10:00PM 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. This will be at the discretion of the Road Foreman.

The issue of excessive overtime hours for Highway Department workers is also a consideration. State of Vermont guidelines for highway departments require employees to have at least four (4) hours rest after a sixteen (16) hour shift. During a prolonged storm event, all of the roads and intersections will be

cleared, but sand may not be applied until after the four (4) hour or longer rest period. Hills, intersections, and curves may be done before a shift ends, depending on condition. Widening and intersection view clearing is performed after a 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 Winhall shall 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, trees, 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 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 meets postal regulations that was damaged as a direct result of the Town snowplowing operations. This does not include damage caused by the snow coming off of the plow or wing blade (refer to Rural Mailbox Placement Specifications). 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:

Rural mailboxes shall be mounted on either a steel pipe sized 1½" in diameter or larger, a 4"x 4" nominal wooden post, or a standard of equivalent strength, set at least 2½ feet into the ground. The leading edge of the mailbox itself should be between 2½ and 3 feet outside of the pavement or of the regularly traveled 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 Winhall may provide to repair or replace any rural mailbox damage as a consequence of winter road maintenance.

Salt Applications:

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

Sand Applications:

Sand is utilized to obtain the goal of a 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 paved 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 ¾" in size and may cause windshield

or other 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 of 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 anticipated, snow and/or sleet may be left on the pavement to capture the freezing rain, thereby preventing a glare ice situation.

Parking:

Parking is not allowed along roadsides or in public areas from November 1 until May 1. 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 Road Foreman enforces this policy and is given latitude for dealing with winter weather situations that occur. Evaluation of methods used and the effectiveness of those methods will be made at the conclusion of events. These evaluations will be based on personal observations and input from the public. The goal of these evaluations is 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 by the Winhall Select Board:

12/18/13
Date

Robert Oakes
Robert Oakes, Chair

William Schwartz
William Schwartz, Vice Chair

Steve Blanchard
Steve Blanchard, Member