

Snowplowing Township Roads



WHY YOU SHOULD NOT SHOVEL OR PLOW SNOW INTO THE STREET

- A township ordinance prohibits it.
- You can be fined.
- You are liable for any accidents that may occur because you discharged snow back onto that portion of the street.

In some cases when the snow lasts for long periods of time, your street may be plowed more than once. The first time would be to make it more manageable to clear the street on a final plowing. Every effort is made to have a safe travel lane after the storm is over. On an average, it takes 10 hours after the snow has stopped to complete the whole Township.

Snow & Ice Removal Operations

When the Director of Public Works becomes aware of a winter storm alert coupled with predictions of significant snow and/or ice accumulations, his first reaction is to direct his employees to prepare the snow removal vehicles. In most situations, Salt trucks of various sizes are loaded with salt. If the storm event is predicted to result in snow accumulations of 4 inches or more, or high winds are expected to cause drifting, then snowplows are attached on all trucks. In these situations, four Township owned vehicles are fitted with plows, and additional trucks are rented to plow snow.

In the event of a snowstorm, the Township takes on the responsibility of clearing approximately 28 roads that consist of 33 miles in one direction of Township roadways. There are three categories of streets in terms of snow and ice removal. **Roadways in the Township are characterized as either major arteries, streets within the various residential neighborhoods, or cu-de-sacs or dead-end streets. Included among the major arteries to be cleared first by the Township are roads leading to state and county roads.**

Major arteries that are the responsibility of NJDOT or Atlantic County DPW include Route 50, Route 669 (11th Ave), Route 668 (Walkers Forge), Route 557 (Tuckahoe Rd.) and Route 666 (Cape May Ave). Additionally all roads in the Oaks of Weymouth section of the Township are the sole responsibility of Hometown America Communities. Again, these roads are the responsibility of the State or County so when Township snowplows are traveling from one development to another, they are directed to keep the plow up.

When the first priority category of streets is satisfactorily cleared, the plows then address the next category: secondary streets. For the purpose of an organized snow plowing effort, the various sections in the Township are grouped into three (3) sectors. Each driver is responsible for a sector to be plowed. Whenever possible, the same driver is responsible for snow clearance of the same sector year in and year out.

With each sector representing over ten (10) miles of roadway, an effective snow clearance effort on a typical twenty (20) foot cart way requires four (4) passes over each street. With a eight (8) foot wide snow blade angled to create a six and a half (6.5) foot wide path, the driver first travels slightly off-center down the street, next, turning around and coming down the opposite direction, another off-center pass is made. Then, a pass is made down the first side of the street clearing the snow to the shoulder. Lastly, the process is repeated, clearing the snow to the shoulder on the opposite side of the street. Snow is cleared shoulder-to-shoulder to accommodate the eventual snowmelt; and, to account for the snow encroachment that result from a possible, second snowstorm. Consequently, snow removal vehicles must travel about 133 miles to clear approximately 33 miles of Township streets. In addition, high winds and drifting, and other inclement conditions will multiply the number of passes needed to clear the streets.

The final category of streets to be plowed are the cul-de-sacs and dead end streets. There are two main reasons for this final prioritization. First, by their very design, these roadways are among the least traveled. Second, because of the small turning radii necessary for a plow truck, smaller vehicles with power-angled plows can only be used to clear the snow. In some instances, special front-end loaders are needed to slowly scoop the snow to clear it out of the way. This is a slow process that may require up to (30) thirty-minutes per street to complete. More so than other streets, plow operators must be extra careful not to bury driveways in cul-de-sac streets.

When snowfall accumulates lesser amounts or the precipitation is mostly ice or freezing rain, the Township is divided into 3 sectors for spreading salt only. This process takes less time and saves the cost of calling hired trucks for removal.

In addition to public roadways, Public Works employees clear the parking lots and related access roads to the Township Municipal Building, Dorothy Post Office, Weymouth Township School, Belcoville Community Center, Weymouth Township DPW garage and Museum.

EMERGENCY SITUATIONS

If an emergency arises on a street that has yet to be cleared of snow and/or ice, the Weymouth Township Office of Emergency Management, Dorothy Volunteer Fire Department or the NJ State Police will notify the Public Works Department by phone or radio. Public Works will dispatch one or two trucks immediately to the site. Two trucks insure a speedy clearance of the street from both ends. This allows Police, fire trucks, and/or ambulances access to the emergency site from either end of the street. In addition, it is not an unknown happenstance for a snowplow truck to lead emergency vehicles to the emergency site and further lead the ambulance to hospital locations outside of the Township.

SALT SUPPLIES

Normally, the Township receives approximately 60 tons of salt for use in clearing the streets. After awarding a contract bid, the contractor will drop off the salt at the Atlantic County DPW site.

WHY NOT PLOW THE ICE?

When snow falls result in less than four (4) inches of accumulation or the streets are covered with ice, snowplowing results in a wasted effort. With the weight of the plow resting on metal skids or caster wheels, aside from gravity, there is no downward pressure on the blade. Consequently, in these instances the snowplow just skims over the snow and/or ice. When weather conditions have resulted in heavy accumulations of snow freezing into ice, plowing efforts result in heavy damage to snow removal equipment. Again, ice removal efforts are best done with salt.

PARTICIPATION AND RESPONSIBILITY OF RESIDENTS

If a resident believes that his/her street has been missed during a snow clearing effort, he or she should report this to the Public Works office by calling (609) 476-2102 or email wtdpw@verizon.net.

The Director asks that the reporting resident state the facts as much as possible. This speeds up the process and reduces the stress in a stressful situation.

In the event of a significant storm, all on street parking in the Township is prohibited. This restriction may be in effect for a period of 72 hours after a snowstorm. Residents should also avoid parking cars in the driveway that overhang the curb. This is a particularly hazardous action that results in vehicular accidents and, at the least, improper snow removal.

For those residents wishing to avoid having newly shoveled driveways subsequently blocked by Township snowplows, there are two recommended courses of action. First, near the street, shovel snow to the right and dig out a pocket in the snow, facing the street, to the left of the driveway. The other

method entails clearing the driveway except for the last four to five feet from the curb. Leave this "snow barrier" in place to block snow being plowed aside in the street, and then finish shoveling after the snowplow truck has passed by.

Residents should also be aware that downed trees blocking the road are, depending on size, cut into sections and cleared to the side of the road. Trees are not removed from private property.

PRIVATE STREETS AND UNDEDICATED ROADS

Snow removal from private streets is not the responsibility of the Township. It is up to the Homeowners Association or other responsible entity to arrange for snow removal.

IN CONCLUSION

As mentioned before, the Township is responsible for snow and ice clearance on approximately 33 miles of Township roadway.

While the Township is clearly responsible to plow and salt streets in the event of a winter storm, Township residents also have a responsibility in this effort, as well. Snow events invoke the restriction of no on-street parking. This and other efforts ensure proper snow removal and reduce potential traffic hazards. In cases of emergency, the Township Public Works Department together with the Police will make special efforts to clear the way for emergency vehicles.

Once again, please be patient and we will try to complete this undertaking as swiftly and safely as possible.