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Town of Wilmington
Department of Public Works
Town Hall
121 Glen Road
Wilmington, MA 01887

Snowplowing & Snow Removal Procedures

This brochure contains important information to help you throughout the winter.

Wilmington Department of Public Works
978-658-4481

A Message from the Director

Winter storms can test the patience of Wilmington residents, motorists, pedestrians, and snowplow operators. The Department of Public Works is committed to keeping the streets open, the traffic moving, and returning the Town's streets and sidewalks to a safe condition as quickly as possible. This brochure is designed to increase awareness about Wilmington's Snowplowing and Snow Removal program, and to encourage everyone's cooperation in helping us achieve our goal.

Please read this brochure to become familiar with the rules and regulations concerning parking, snow removal and town bylaws. The Wilmington DPW appreciates your patience and understanding during the winter months.

Michael J. Woods
Public Works Director

An Overview . . .

This brochure provides general information about the Wilmington DPW snow and ice program, including important bylaws, winter tips, important telephone numbers, mailbox damage, Town Right of Way, and information regarding the winter parking ban. More importantly, the brochure is intended to increase awareness about the roles we all play in providing safer streets and sidewalks during snow and ice emergencies.

The Wilmington DPW maintains over 115 miles of roads in the community during the winter months, sanding and salting during ice and freezing rain storms, and plowing the snow off roadways during more significant storms.

The Town of Wilmington's snow and ice plan follows clearly identified routes when removing snow and ice from streets, sidewalks and Town parking areas.

In addition to the Town's fleet, the Department utilizes the services of local contractors.

The Wilmington DPW strives to ensure the safest possible conditions during and after winter storm events. Plows will continue to clean, treat, and widen roadways until reasonably safe conditions are met. **Please keep in mind that plows and sanders are still hard at work well after the snow has stopped falling.**

Snowplowing, Sanding and Salting

DPW crews will be on the roadways as soon as it is necessary. Response time will depend on several factors: the moisture of the snow, timing and duration of the storm, and whether the storm has freezing rain and blowing snow.

Snow has different weight and compacting properties. A fluffy, dry snow requires less salt, sand and plowing than a heavy wet snow. Wet snow may result in very slippery conditions especially when the snow freezes on the pavement.

The timing of a storm can also determine when crews will begin their cleanup. During high commuting times, crews will make every effort to keep the major roadways clear of snow and ice. Secondary and side streets will be cleared as soon as possible. Top priority will be given to the heavily traveled roads to ensure everyone's safety. Snow that falls on these roads often becomes packed by cars, making it more difficult to scrape off. During evening and early morning storms, DPW crews will have ample time to prepare the roads for the commuting hours.

The duration of the storm plays an important role in snowplowing and sanding operations. Storms of extended duration require all available resources (salt, sand, equipment and employees) to keep roads open over an extended period of time. Four inches of snow that falls over a 24-hour period will require more salt, sand and manpower hours than six inches of snow that falls over an 8-hour period.

Motorists and pedestrians are advised to stay off the roadways until the pavement can be treated.

Sidewalk Plowing

The DPW will plow sidewalks along central routes that are heavily traveled by children on their way to and from school.

Sidewalks along central routes or those streets heavily traveled by school children may not be cleared immediately after the storm if there are back-to-back storms. The DPW needs your assistance to make sure that snow is cleared from the sidewalk in front of your property.

Fire Hydrants & Catch Basins

Fire hydrants and catch basins must be kept free and clear of snow and ice to ensure the safety of your neighborhood in the event of an emergency during the winter months.

Catch basins must be clear of snow and ice to reduce the possibility of street flooding during heavy rains or when snow melts.

The DPW needs your help to remove snow from hydrants after a heavy snowfall. Because all DPW crews assist with all snow and ice operations, those crews in the Water Division may be unable to remove snow from hydrants until days after the storm has ended. In the event of back-to-back storms, DPW crews may not be able to remove the snow for two to three weeks after the storms.

Your assistance is important in making sure that snow is cleared from hydrants and catch basins.

Driveways

Although the Wilmington DPW makes every effort to minimize the amount of snow that gets plowed into driveways, it is almost inevitable that this will occur. Clearing driveway openings is the responsibility of the property owner.

Plow operators cannot lift the plow blades as they pass a driveway. Snow will be plowed into driveways as we perform curb-to-curb plowing. You may wish to clear your driveway several times during the storm or wait until the storm and plowing activities have ended. Please keep in mind that one of the last steps in any snow plowing operation is to push the edges back to widen the road and allow for future snow storage. This standard operation may result in the placement of windrows at the end of your driveway, which is an unfortunate and unavoidable consequence of snowplowing.

Shoveling, plowing or blowing snow back into the street when clearing driveways and sidewalks is prohibited by Town ordinance. Violators will be fined.

Mailboxes

If a property owner believes that his/her mailbox has been damaged by direct contact with the snowplow or sidewalk plow, he/she may report the claim with the DPW at 978-658-4481. The DPW will investigate the claim and if sufficient evidence is provided, repair operations will be scheduled into the daily work order once all emergency and snow related priorities are completed. The following conditions apply:

- The DPW will only repair or replace mailboxes if the box is damaged as a result of direct contact with the snowplow. Repairs or replacements will not be made if the damage is a result of snow being discharged from the snowplow.
- Mailboxes installed in the Town Right of Way are placed at the owner's risk. Each mailbox installation should be sufficiently solid to withstand snow-clearing efforts by the Town. The rolling action of the snow will destroy or damage all but the strongest of mailboxes and posts.
- Mailboxes deemed damaged by direct contact with the snowplow will only be replaced with standard steel mail-boxes and standard 4" x 4" pressure treated posts, if needed. Custom built mailboxes and posts are placed in the Town Right of Way at the owner's own risk.
- The DPW will not replace plastic mailboxes. Plastic mailboxes in cold weather may become very brittle and are not suitable in cold weather climates.
- The DPW will not repair mailboxes that are in poor existing condition due to lack of maintenance or vandalism, or have posts that have rotted.
- The DPW will not replace mailboxes if the front of the box extends past the curb line and is not at least 6" to 12" back from the curb line.
- It will be the responsibility of the property owner to clear snow around mailboxes to ensure mail delivery by the U.S. Postal Department.
- The location and construction of mailboxes shall conform to the rules and regulations of the US Postal Service. Please note that any mailbox and/or post located in a Town of Wilmington Right of Way that is deemed by the Public Works Director to be a safety hazard or a hindrance to maintenance operations may be removed by the Town of Wilmington as an unauthorized encroachment under Massachusetts General Law Chapter 86 Section 3.

Winter Parking Ban

The Town of Wilmington enforces an overnight parking ban that is in effect between 1:00 am and 6:00 am from December 1st to April 1st each year, regardless of weather conditions. If it snows after April 1st, the parking ban goes back into effect.

Failure to comply with the regulation will result in the owner receiving a ticket from the Wilmington Police Department and/or the removal of the vehicle at the owner's expense from the roadway during a snow emergency. If a vehicle is impaired and cannot be removed until morning, the owner is required to alert the Wilmington Police Department for assistance.

Objects in the Roadway

Many residents are not aware that their front yards do not, in most cases, extend to the edge of roadway pavement. The Town-owned layout within which the actual road itself is built is referred to as a Right of Way. Right of Way widths differ from roadway to roadway, and some roads actually have a variable width Right of Way.

Please be aware that the Town will not be responsible for damage to any property or personal item which has been placed or left within the roadway or Town Right of Way. These items include, but are not limited to: basketball hoops, bicycles, toys, fences or walls. We ask for your assistance in removing these objects from the Right of Way during the winter months in order to protect your personal property and make the plow routes safer for our drivers.

Winter Sand

Sand for residential use is available at the Town Salt Shed off of Federal Street. Please be aware that this sand is for residents only and may only be taken in reasonable amounts.

Town Bylaws

Section 10: No person shall throw or place snow or cause to be thrown or placed any ice or snow into or upon any public way in such a manner as to obstruct or endanger travel upon the way.

Section 17: The owner or occupant of any place of business shall keep the sidewalk adjoining his premises clear of snow and protected when icy conditions prevail. Whoever fails to comply with this section within 24 hours following a snow or ice storm shall forfeit and pay for each offense a fine not exceeding fifty ($50.00) dollars.

Section 19: No persons shall leave any vehicle parked upon a public way or a way to which the public has a right of access in such manner that will interfere with the plowing or removal of snow or the removal of ice therefrom.

No person having a vehicle under his care or control shall leave the same parked or unattended upon a public way or a way to which the public has a right of access between the hours of 1:00 a.m. and 6:00 a.m. from December 1st through April 1st in each year. Whoever violates any provision of this section shall forfeit and pay for each offense a fine not exceeding fifty ($50.00) dollars. Each day shall be considered a separate offense.

The Public Works Director or the Police Chief is authorized to remove or cause to be removed, to some convenient place, including in such term a public garage any vehicle interfering with removing or plowing snow or removing ice, from any public way and the owner of such vehicle shall be liable for the cost of such removal and for the storage charges, if any, resulting therefrom.

Winter Tips

- Respect parking restrictions. Snowplows navigate many narrow streets. Residents are requested to avoid parking on the street to allow the snowplow to clear the street from curb-to-curb. Cars that remain on the street may be plowed in, damaged by a skidding vehicle, ticketed and/or towed.
- Pay close attention to weather forecasts.
- Freezing rain and wet snow create the most slippery road conditions. When the forecast calls for snow, sleet or freezing rain, Wilmington residents are urged to take precautionary measures and stay off the roadways if possible.
- Do not pile snow around or near fire hydrants. Hydrants need to be visible and accessible at all times in case of emergency.
- On your trash day, please do not place trash or recycling bins in the street.
- Please do not plow, shovel or snow-blow snow onto the street, as doing so is in violation of Massachusetts General Law.
- Observe all winter parking bans.
- Do not allow children to make snow forts at the edge of roads.

Important Telephone Numbers

Plowing Complaints 978-658-4481

Police/Fire Emergency . . . 911

Non-Emergency Police . . . 978-658-5071

Non-Emergency Fire 978-658-3346

Reading Light 781-944-1340
(downed wires/tree in wires)