

Town of Kent Highway Department

Road Maintenance Policy

Summer Operations

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1. Introduction

This policy is intended to provide the motoring public, emergency service agencies & Kent residents with general information regarding warm weather operations and the Kent Highway Department's maintenance and service policy. Additionally, helpful information is given suggesting ways in which the public can assist the Department with its duties.

The Town of Kent Highway Department is responsible for the maintenance and repair of 216 lane miles of road and 16 bridges throughout the town. This is achieved with a workforce of twenty men, one Highway Superintendent and one Payroll Clerk (executive secretary). Basically, an average of 11 miles of road per department employee.

2. Fences, Hedges and Landscaping

When the Highway Department is alerted of a potential hazard on our right-of-way due to an obstruction of view created by overgrown bushes, shrubs or hedges, corrective action must be taken. The Department has the means to cut the roadside brush ourselves but we try to work with the homeowners giving them the chance to do a careful and attractive pruning first. We do not have the time or equipment to do this type of work in residential areas. Please read and adhere to the following:

Town of Kent Zoning Board Law: 77-17. Fences, hedges & landscaping

Except as set forth hereinafter, no fence or garden wall in any required yard or between the front building line and the required front yard shall exceed a height of six (6) feet. If erected along the street line, the height shall be measured from the existing elevation of the opposite point along the centerline of the street. Within a radius of thirty (30) feet of the corner formed by intersecting streets, the height of any fence or garden wall, hedge or other densely growing shrubbery shall not exceed two and one-half (2-1/2) feet.

3. Street Sweeping

The Highway Department schedules all of the Town's roads to be swept in the spring once the threat of any snowstorms have ceased. We have 216 lane miles of roads and our two sweepers average about 5 miles a day. Once filled, the trucks must return to the yard to dump the sweepings which are mixed with our job soil and wood chips to be made into top soil. It is a tedious operation. The modern world of NYC commuters wants the roads black after each storm, meaning we must apply much more sand than we did thirty years ago.

4. Debris on the Road

No person shall throw or deposit upon the highway right-of-way any glass bottles, glass, nails, tacks, wire, cans, snow, or any other substance likely to injure any person, animal, or vehicle upon such highway.

Any person who drops, or permits to be dropped or thrown upon any highway any destructive or injurious material or any material interfering with the safe use of the highway shall immediately remove the same or cause it to be removed.

Any person removing a wrecked or damaged vehicle from a highway shall remove any glass or other injurious substances dropped upon the highway from such vehicle.

5. Drainage

The pipes or open ditches along the roadside are there for drainage purposes: residents should not deposit leaves or other debris there on the roadway.

Clogging of the drainage system will cause flooding of residences and premature deterioration of the road.

6. Routine Complaints

Upon receipt of a complaint by either phone, in-person or email, the Department dispatches either the Superintendent, General Foreman, Crew Chief or other qualified person to access the situation.

Every effort is made to rectify the problem as soon as possible. Response time depends on the public safety factor involved and the current workload within the Department at that time.

The Department responds to a variety of requests ranging from potholes, dead or fallen trees, dead wildlife in the roadway, clogged culverts and basins, beaver dams blocking drainage, car accidents, assisting the KPD, FD, LCFD all the while trying to complete our major paving projects , vehicle maintenance and repairs.

7. Mailboxes

Mailboxes are established by property owners within the highway right-of-way. A county or town could adopt an ordinance that specifies the type of placement of mailboxes to prevent them from becoming a fixed hazard.

The other aspect of mailboxes to consider is the accidental damage to mailboxes in connection with the municipality's maintenance operations, particularly snow and ice removal. There is no right of the property owners to recover against the municipality for the accidental damage to mailboxes. Repairs are an individual judgement of the Highway Superintendent. Please read the "Winter Operations" policy for more information.