

**TOWN OF KENT HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT  
SNOW & ICE CONTROL POLICY  
Winter Operations**

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

This policy is intended to provide the motoring public and emergency service agencies and personnel with general information regarding snow and ice removal operations and levels of service. Additionally, this policy will serve to enlist the help of the public as well as serve as a guide and training tool for Highway Department employees.

The Town of Kent Highway Department is responsible for the maintenance and repair of 108 centerline miles of town roads and 16 bridges throughout the town. The Highway Department has no greater challenge than during the winter snow and ice season. The Department is solely responsible for providing passable roads for routine travel and emergency services during and after a snow or ice event during the winter season.

## **2. SNOW AND ICE CONTROL GOALS**

- Maintain town roads in passable driving conditions for the motoring public in a safe, cost effective manner with motorist safety, budget constraints, and Highway Department personnel safety in mind
- Continually monitor weather and road conditions to enable the Highway Department to determine an effective response to an approaching winter storm event or a storm that has arrived
- Monitor ongoing and past snow and ice control operations, strategies, and costs
- Educate the public with regard to what levels of service can be expected during and after a storm and how the public can help the Highway Department best perform its snow and ice removal duties

## **3. LEVEL OF SERVICE**

It is not the policy of the Town of Kent Highway Department to provide continually bare roads or to provide snow and ice control services 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. It is also not possible to maintain a bare road surface during or immediately following a snow and ice event. Typical hours of operation for snow and ice control are from the hours of 4:00 AM to approximately 12:00 PM. Snow and ice control operations will be primarily focused on morning and evening travel times.

During times of severe blizzard, drifting and/or icing conditions, the Highway Superintendent or General Foreman may opt to keep 1 or 2 trucks on duty after normal hours if it is anticipated that without this extended operation it will be extremely difficult to open or clear certain roads for commuters.

Sections of roadways improved for winter travel may continue to have residual snow and ice in a compacted condition upon them until warmer temperatures or de-icing materials are applied to allow for complete melt-off after a storm. These conditions may be continuous or they may be localized in certain areas of the road depending on temperature, wind velocity, wind direction and other factors.

## **4. EQUIPMENT**

The Kent Highway Department will acquire, maintain, repair, and replace equipment as the annual Town Road Machinery budget (as adopted by the Kent Town Board) allows. To provide for utilization of equipment in a cost-effective manner, the town may use trucks with plows and sanders, motor graders, front-end loaders, or snow blowers as necessary for the control of snow and ice on its roads.

The Department also uses a computer monitor and weather information service to devise its strategies. The Department uses sander controls that are calibrated and tested prior to each snow season. Annual calibration and maintenance of the sander controls is essential to overall cost effective snow and ice control operations.

## **5. DISPATCH OF EQUIPMENT**

The start of snow and ice control operations for any snow or ice event is dependent on the immediate and anticipated weather conditions. In conjunction with the visual inspection of the existing conditions on various roads and the monitoring of weather predictions of anticipated conditions, the Highway Superintendent will initiate snow and ice control operations by calling in the necessary personnel and dispatching of equipment as required. The response time will be as soon as possible depending on how fast the existing road conditions allow personnel to report to work. The Superintendent or his designee(s) has

the authority to dispatch town equipment to any operator's residence to provide transportation to the operator.

For emergency vehicles responding to emergencies, necessary equipment and personnel will be dispatched as soon as possible. The request for assistance must be received directly from the Putnam County Office of Sheriff, Kent Police Department, or a Fire Department officer at the scene.

## 6. MATERIALS AND PLOWING PROCEDURES

Kent Highway Department currently uses a mixture of 25% abrasive sand and 75% treated magnesium chloride and environmentally-friendly rock salt on the 216 lane miles they plow. In some icing situations, straight salt may be used to speed up the melting process. Too much sand absorbs phosphorous which ends up in the catch basins and local lakes, which in turn takes oxygen from the water which creates algal blooms. It is an evolving science trying to perfect the best balance of materials.

Sand alone does not have ice-melting capabilities. It is used primarily to provide some limited traction. The salt helps prevent the sand from freezing and provides ice-melting capabilities by creating a brine solution that has a lower freezing temperature than the temperature of the surrounding ice. The brine solution is activated by a combination of heat from tire friction on the pavement, the sun and moisture in the air and from the accumulated snow on the road. Treated salt has a practical working temperature range down to about -20 degrees Fahrenheit. Limited or no sanding is done during periods of snowfall and during blowing and drifting conditions because falling or blowing and drifting snow covers the material and it is scraped off on subsequent plowing passes.

Plowing typically ends when the storm ends and roads have been made passable for travel. Drift plowing and pushing back accumulated snow along the roadside will continue after the storm as needed.

## 7. MAILBOXES AND MAIL DELIVERY

THERE IS **NO** STATUTORY OR LEGAL AUTHORITY REQUIRING highway agencies to replace damaged mailboxes. Under Section 319 of the New York State Highway Law, mailboxes are considered highway obstructions and are only "allowed" in the right-of-way as a convenience to the owner as it is understood that they are required for mail delivery.

The replacement and repair of mailboxes by the Town of Kent Highway Department HAS BEEN DONE AS A COURTESY, **NOT** AS A LEGAL REQUIREMENT. Please keep this in mind and know that **our highway crews do their best to avoid mailboxes, but oftentimes poor visibility, oncoming traffic, cars parked in the roadway, and hazardous road conditions work against them.** The best way to protect your mailbox during the winter months is to ensure that it is firmly and properly attached to the post and that the assembly is kept simple to minimize impact surface area for plowed snow.

Every effort is made by plow operators to remove snow as close to mailboxes as possible in order to provide access to U.S. Postal Service delivery vehicles. However, it is the responsibility of the resident to provide cleaning and access adjacent to their mailboxes. During and after snow events, highway agencies, in the course of plowing, receive phone calls regarding damage to mailboxes. This can be a result of a plow hitting the mailbox directly or the force of the snow being thrown by the plows. **If such damage is done by snowplows, it is *NOT* done intentionally-it is an unfortunate consequence of snow removal by large trucks in often low visibility and hazardous conditions.**

## **8. DRIVEWAYS**

During snow removal operations the accumulated windrow of snow being pushed and carried by the plow inevitably gets deposited to the trucks' right side shoulder and/or ditch along its route. Driveways along the route also get filled in. The Highway Department assumes no responsibility for the removal of snow deposited in driveways as a result of normal snow removal operations. The Highway Department cannot provide exact times that a certain road will be plowed and it is not practical to change the angle of the blade to avoid driveways. Changing the angle of the plow at driveways would cause snow to be deposited in the driving lane of the road thus defeating the purpose of plowing the road.

Over the last few years, the practice of plowing or depositing snow from private driveways or private property onto the highway has increased significantly, especially after roadways are cleared and snow has been pushed back behind the shoulders by highway agencies. This is a dangerous practice and it is strictly prohibited under Section 1219 of the Vehicle and Traffic Law and Section 214 of the New York State Highway Law. Depositing snow or ice onto the roadway or shoulder may result in a serious accident and the person or persons responsible may be liable to a fine of \$1000.00 per day, per occurrence for each day the occurrence remains uncorrected. Police agencies and highway agencies will issue written warnings prior to issuing tickets.

## **9. DEPOSITING SNOW ON A HIGHWAY**

It is illegal to plow, place, push, throw or otherwise deposit or cause to be deposited, any snow or destructive or injurious material or any material which interferes with the safe use of the highway per section 1219 of the New York State Vehicle & Traffic Law.

## **10. LANDSCAPING AND LAWN DAMAGE**

Landscaping and lawns, including but not limited to; shrubs, trees, inanimate objects, etc. installed by a property owner within the ROW will be the responsibility of the owner and the owner assumes all risk of

damage to such items. Furthermore, the town cannot reasonably control drift or discharge of snow and/or shoulder materials from the snowplow into roadside ditches and lawns. Unless there is lawn or landscaping damage off the ROW due to direct contact with the plow or wing, the town will not be responsible for the removal/repair of any shoulder materials inadvertently cast into adjacent lawn areas by the plow or wing.

## **11. SERVICE REQUESTS, INQUIRIES, AND COMPLAINTS**

All requests, inquiries or complaints about snow and ice control service/operations should be directed to the Kent Highway Department office at (845)-225-7172. Normal office hours during the winter snow and ice season are 7:00 AM - 3:30 PM, Monday through Friday. The on-duty Highway Department personnel will respond as soon as feasibly possible.

During any given severe snow or ice event, the Highway Department is extremely busy and committed to clearing the roads as quickly as possible and to the best of their ability for the traveling public. It should be noted that at the start of or during a snow or ice event, Snow-Watch and plow operators will either be en route or already on duty. During the typical snow and ice control hours of 4:00 AM to 12:00 PM, if it is snowing heavily and/or the roads are icing over, the Department is well aware of that fact and is out doing all they can at that particular time. The Highway Department recommends patience and due caution if travel is required.

## **12. EXCEPTIONS**

Each snow or ice event has individual characteristics such as rate of accumulation, temperature, wind velocity and direction, visibility, time of day, etc. associated with it and therefore must be dealt with accordingly. The Town Superintendent of Highways and/or his designee(s) reserve the right to alter operational strategies, deviate from these standards or terminate ongoing snow and ice control operations at any time, if it is determined that various factors including but not limited to, the need to rest snowplow crews, equipment failure, extreme snowfall accumulation and conditions which make snow and ice control operations unsafe, unnecessary or ineffective.

## **13. HOW THE PUBLIC CAN HELP**

There are several things that motorists and the public can do to help the Highway Department best perform their snow and ice control duties.

- Do not leave home for errands that can wait until the storm is over, stay off the roads.
- The overnight parking of vehicles within the town right of way is hereby prohibited. Vehicles found parked within the town right of way will be issued a traffic summons and towed at the owner's expense. This ban is in effect from November 15<sup>th</sup> – April 15<sup>th</sup> yearly, by Order of the Kent Town Board.
- Notice is hereby given that all individuals plowing snow must remove all snow deposited by them within the town right of way.
- Residents of the Town of Kent are also cautioned that should their vehicle become disabled during a snow storm and abandoned, the operator must notify the Town of Kent Police Department forthwith and such vehicle must be removed as soon as possible or it will be towed at the owner's expense.
- Be patient and be assured that during a snow or ice event every reasonable effort will be made to keep the roads open.
- Be considerate of the snowplow operators.

- Do not attempt to stop a snowplow or obstruct its path. Plow trucks, when loaded with sand and salt, weigh approximately 31 tons. That is a lot of weight and responsibility for the driver to deal with and the trucks simply are not as maneuverable and agile as passenger vehicles. They require extra time and distance to stop or avoid trouble.
- When approaching snow removal equipment from the rear, travel a minimum of 200 feet behind the equipment allowing for sanding and abrupt movements.
- Use extreme caution when passing snow removal equipment. Before you pass, please flash your headlights and/or honk your horn to alert the operator of your intentions.
- Do not park along the roadway during a snow or ice event. Parked vehicles are a hazard not only to the snowplow operators but the traveling public as well. Any cars that are parked along the roadway will be called in to the Putnam Sheriff or Kent Police Department for removal procedures.
- When clearing driveways put the snow on the "down" side relative to the direction of travel by the snowplow so when the plow blade does deposit its windrow of snow back into the driveway there will be less snow for the homeowner to remove.

## 14. WINTER DRIVING TIPS

Winter driving can be very dangerous and requires motorists to be fully alert and aware of their surrounding conditions. There are some things that can be done by motorists to improve their chances for a safe driving experience. Some of the following tips can help.

- Don't drive unless you have to.
- If you must drive, drive defensively, wear your seatbelt, turn your headlights on if conditions warrant their use, be alert and exercise extreme caution. Driving on snow and ice packed roads requires your full attention and demands your best driving skills.
- Be informed of the current and predicted weather conditions for your area and know your employers' inclement weather policy. The fewer cars on the road, the more effective the plowing operations.
- Prepare your vehicle in advance of inclement weather. Regularly check the battery, antifreeze, windshield wipers, heater and defroster. Have at least a half a tank of fuel and have adequate snow tires or chains on your vehicle.
- Clean all snow and ice from your vehicle including all glass areas, headlights and taillights before driving.
- Have some basic equipment and extra clothing in your vehicle in case of an accident, long delay or mechanical problems. Some useful items to have are a flashlight, jumper cables, first aid kit, a hat, gloves, boots, blanket, ice scraper and possibly a small shovel.
- Allow yourself extra distance between your vehicle and the vehicle in front of you. This is especially true at intersections where other motorists may be skidding and having difficulty in stopping their vehicle.
- Remember to brake slowly to avoid skidding
- Allow yourself extra time to get to your destination, as you will likely be traveling at a slower speed than normal. This is especially true of vehicles that get caught behind a snowplow.
- "Slick Roads Cause Accidents" is often a frequent newspaper headline during the winter months. The truth is that slick roads may contribute to an accident but they are not the sole cause of accident. Accidents are generally caused by drivers who fail to drive appropriately for winter conditions. Sections 1180(a) and 1180(e) of the Vehicle and Traffic Law state that "No person shall drive a vehicle at a speed greater than is reasonable and prudent under the conditions and having regard to the actual and potential hazards then existing." Accepted safe winter driving practices include, but are not limited to, slower driving, increased braking distance and increased vehicle separation. Following these guidelines will significantly reduce your chances of being involved in an accident on slick roads.

- Highway agencies spend a considerable amount of tax money to ensure the roads are cleared in an efficient manner after snow and ice events. Snow removal efforts do not guarantee bare or dry roads. The cost to provide these conditions would far outstrip what most tax payers would be willing to pay. Even when bare roads can be obtained, weather conditions such as wind and rapidly dropping temperatures can alter highway conditions dramatically from area to the next. The best course of action for anyone traveling during the winter months is to adjust your driving practices to meet the conditions present.

## **15. REVIEW OF POLICY**

The Highway Department will keep on file comments and complaints regarding this policy. This policy will be reviewed periodically and will consider comments received since the last review.

# WHYS OF SNOWPLOWS

## 1. Why do snowplows drive so slow?



Snowplows typically drive at 35mph, this is to ensure the salt is being distributed evenly throughout the lanes.

## 2. What is a Travel Advisory?

It's a caution to drivers to avoid travel whenever possible when winter weather makes driving difficult.



## 3. Why does the plow always bury my driveway?



When digging out your driveway, pile the snow on the right side, as the plow pushes snow from the left

## 4. Why is my road always plowed last?

Your local highway and DPW departments must plow the highest priority roads first. These roads are the most traveled, including roads that contain hospitals, schools, and evacuation routes.



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# What you need to know Mailbox Placement



## Height of mailbox placement

Your mailbox should be 41 inches to 45 inches from the road surface.



**Why:** The snow plow wing is 40 inches, having a mailbox at 42 inches is a risky minimum, and does not consider build-up of snow, ice or gravel



## How far off the road should a mailbox be placed?

Your mailbox should be placed 6 inches to 8 inches back from the curb or shoulder.



**Why:** Snowplows have a 15-foot wide pass. NYS Traffic Law prohibits the snowplow from crossing the centerline. Hence anything 15 feet from the centerline will get hit.



## Mailbox installation.

A 4" x 4" wood support or a 2" diameter standard steel or aluminum pipe, buried no more than 24" deep.



**Why:** This is recommended by the Federal Highway Administration.



## Why all these standards?



**Safety!** The best mailbox supports must be stable but bend or fall away if hit.



NYSLTAP -  
CLRP website



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Local Technical  
Assistance Program



How to install a  
mailbox USPS