

# TOWN OF SUNDERLAND SNOW & ICE POLICY

## INTRODUCTION

This Snow & Ice Policy is established by the Town of Sunderland to provide a uniform understanding of the priorities and operations procedures for winter snow and ice removal.

The Sunderland Highway Department's primary objective is to remove snow and ice from the public roadways as safely, efficiently and cost effectively as possible to keep roadways passable. The Department is responsible for snow and ice removal for over 40 miles of public roadways, over 4 miles of sidewalks and all municipal parking lots. Route 116 and Route 63 are not maintained by the Town of Sunderland. They are under the jurisdiction of, and maintained by the Massachusetts Highway Department.

Many factors determine the Town's response to a snow or ice event including the forecast, timing, intensity and duration of the storm, along with the temperatures before, during and after the storm. All of these factors determine the staff time and materials required to effectively manage the snow and ice removal for each storm.

## OPERATIONS PROCEDURES

The Sunderland Highway Department's regular working hours are Mon. through Thursday 6:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

During the winter months these hours may vary during periods of storm preparation, response and clean up.

The Highway Department's snow and ice operations procedures consist of three phases:

1. **Beginning of the Storm** (Notification and Anti-Icing)

Highway Department drivers are mobilized when:

- The Highway Superintendent directs them, based on imminent storm arrival.
- The Police Department notifies the Highway Department of hazardous road conditions, specifying the location(s) of the hazardous conditions. The Police Department is primarily responsible for notifying the Highway Superintendent of storm conditions outside of the Highway Department's working hours.
- The Fire or Ambulance service requests assistance from the Highway Department in order to respond to a public safety emergency.

**Public Safety emergency calls are given top priority.**

- The Highway Department receives requests or concerns from residents and acts on them during working hours.

Once a storm begins, depending on the expected intensity and duration of the event, the Highway Department initiates anti-icing operations (sanding and salting) first on the main roads, connectors, hills and school bus routes (if school is in session), and last, if deemed necessary by the Highway Superintendent, on residential roads and cul-de-sacs. Anti-icing operations prevent the snow from becoming compacted and frozen to the road surface.

2. **During the Storm** (Plowing Operations)

Plowing operations begin when a minimum of two (2) to three (3) inches of snow have accumulated on the ground and more is expected. The main roads are plowed by larger trucks on pre-determined routes, while the residential roads and cul-de-sacs are plowed on pre-determined routes by smaller trucks. Public Safety Complex emergency vehicle bays are plowed when plows leave the Highway Garage at the start of plowing operations, and at regular (4) four-inch accumulation intervals thereafter.

During the storm, Highway Department personnel work “around-the-clock” if necessary to keep the roads open and passable.

3. **After the Storm** (De-icing & Clean up)

Once the snowfall has stopped and roads are cleared of snow, post-storm sanding and salting commences if necessary, based on weather conditions. Plows push back the amassed snow at corners and intersections, to provide safer visibility. If deemed necessary, plows will push snow banks further back along roadways during working hours as manpower and equipment are available.

Once all public roads are clear, the school and municipal lots, and finally sidewalks are cleared of snow and sanded during working hours, if necessary.

## **BYLAWS & RESTRICTIONS**

### **Winter Parking Ban (Sunderland Bylaw §148-11)**

The Town’s annual on-street winter parking ban commences on November 1<sup>st</sup> and ends on April 1<sup>st</sup>. Illegally parked vehicles are subject to a \$20.00 fine and towing at the owner’s expense. The Police Department enforces this bylaw.

### **Depositing snow or other debris into public ways (Sunderland Bylaw §106-1)**

Residents are prohibited from depositing debris into a public way. This includes, shoveling, plowing or blowing snow into or across any public road. The penalty for violation is \$20.00. The Police Department, in consultation with the Highway Department, enforces this bylaw.

### **Winter Road Closings**

Sunderland maintains an annual list of public ways not maintained from November 1<sup>st</sup> through April 1<sup>st</sup>. The Town is not responsible for opening access to these roads during winter months, nor is it responsible for damage to private property or personal injury on these roads during winter months.

### **Plow Damage**

The Town’s right-of-way is often up to 50 feet wide, and in most cases, extends 10 to 15 feet beyond the edge of a paved or gravel road. Anything placed within the Town’s right-of-way is placed there at the owner’s risk. The Town is not responsible for damage to private property (mailboxes, recycle and trash containers, fences, steps, lawns, sprinkler heads, trees, shrubs or other items) located within a public way, and does not reimburse for, or repair damage to these items due to snow plowing operations.

Mailboxes should be secured and set back at the maximum allowable distance from the roadside, and reflective stakes should be placed along the edge of private property to protect lawns and landscaping. Recycle and trash containers should be placed in clear view away from snow banks, and sufficiently off the road to avoid damage.

## **Private Roads and Driveways**

The Town's snow & ice operations personnel (while on Town time) and equipment are prohibited from sanding, plowing or otherwise clearing private property including private roads, driveways, walks, etc.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is the responsibility of residents to remove snow from their driveways. Residents should place snow (off the public way) at the "downstream" side of their driveway from the direction of the snowplow to help keep larger amounts of snow from being deposited back into the driveway during plowing operations. Residents may want to wait for the street and sidewalk if applicable, to be cleared and opened up to its full width before clearing the entrance of their driveways.

Rocks or large objects should not be placed on the road edge. This may cause plow damage, vehicle damage or operator injury.

Residents should shovel out the fire hydrant nearest their house for their personal safety, and should keep nearby catch basins clear of snow and ice to prevent street flooding during heavy rains or snow melting periods.

Children should not be permitted to play in snow banks at or near the edge of the road.

Residents using roads for pedestrian access or recreation during plowing operations should wear reflective clothing at all times.

Concerns regarding snow plowing operations should be directed to the Highway Superintendent. The Highway Superintendent shall forward concerns to the Selectmen's office for notification purposes. Public Safety emergency calls require priority response. Other concerns and requests are verified and responded to by the Highway Superintendent in order of submission, during working hours after plowing operations are finished.

Patience should be exercised during snow plowing operations. Sunderland's 40 miles of roadway, 4 miles of sidewalks and all municipal lots are maintained by limited staff and equipment. Every public way shall be cleared as safely, efficiently and cost effectively as possible.

## **DEPARTURE FROM POLICY**

The Town recognizes that storm conditions may be so unusual or unexpected that a departure from these general policies must be authorized. Therefore, when conditions warrant, the Highway Superintendent may order a departure from these policies when the Highway Superintendent determines conditions necessitate such action.

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Board Amended: