

## **Oakland Public Works Winter Operations / Snow Removal**

### **SNOW PLOWING**

In order to plow and sand the roadways, sidewalks, and parking lots, winter snow removal assignments are divided among the public works crew who are given individual routes. Snow removal from sidewalks is normally performed either during or immediately following a storm, as conditions permit. Factoring in dead-end streets, numerous intersections, traffic volumes, etc., the time to plow the average route during periods of good visibility is around three hours. During periods of heavy or wet snow it can take much longer. Other conditions such as lines down, accidents, equipment breakdowns, illnesses or injury of an employee or other family emergency must be factored into the length of time it may take, as routes become expanded to compensate for manpower or equipment shortages.

**When a Snowstorm Begins** – Before or after normal business hours please contact Oakland Police Department at 465-2202 if you have any immediate concerns or problems needing to be reported or 911 in case of emergency. If you have any no-immediate concerns or issues during normal business hours you can contact the town office 465-7357, because our crew will be busy getting ready or on the roads. Shortly before or as precipitation begins moving into our area, the main arteries, connector roads, intersections and hills are treated with a sand and salt mixture. This helps to prevent snow from bonding to the pavement and gives added traction to vehicle tires.

**During the Storm** - When nominal accumulations begin to occur, our crew will begin plowing their assigned routes. Plowing and sanding operations continue until the snow stops. At all times during and after a storm, priority is given to keeping the best possible travel conditions on all Town streets. Because of increased costs for winter materials, applications of sand and salt will likely be limited to an initial treatment at the beginning of a storm and immediately following the conclusion of the storm. Primary arteries and major intersections may receive more numerous treatments, as conditions and situations require. Sleet and freezing rain events will obviously require more aggressive surface treatment applications.

**When the Storm is Complete** - When the snow ends, all routes are plowed again, and snowbanks are pushed back (where possible) to make room for future storms. All streets and parking lots will get additional material treatment where needed. Sidewalks and walkways will be cleared during or after plowing operations are complete based on manpower and may take several more hours.

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### **SNOW REMOVAL**

During some big storms, Public Works crews are on the job around the clock plowing and sanding. When the weather has cleared and the crews have had at least twenty-four hours to rest, snow removal begins. Snow removal consists of hauling snow away to a snow dump from areas such as the Main Street business district, municipal parking lots and busy intersections where snow obstructs the view of traffic. Snow removal priorities are very difficult to set, and an effort is made to treat all business owners and

citizens fairly. Snow removal takes several days to complete, is very expensive and difficult to accomplish. For these reasons, patience and understanding will help us to make our roads safe and visible for everyone. As a reminder, always be on the lookout and aware of our equipment during snow removal operations, which may block or partially block roadways, intersections, and driveways due to the location of snow piles and banks. Please keep in mind that snow and cold temperatures are part of living in Maine.

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## HOW YOU CAN HELP WITH WINTER OPERATIONS

1. The decision to travel in winter storms (snow and/or icy conditions) is yours and yours alone, so please do not drive unless it is absolutely necessary. And please pay attention to all snow and travel advisories.
2. Operators of plow vehicles need your help as much as you need theirs. They must devote their full attention to operating the plow equipment in addition to driving the vehicle. **PLEASE?** Be patient and do not follow snow removal equipment too closely, if you can't see their mirrors than they can't see you! Allow plenty of room for them to operate and do their jobs.
3. Slow down! You may want and expect to be able to drive the speed limit, but will you be able to stop safely and keep your vehicle under control in unexpected situations?
4. If you **MUST** pass, pick a good place to do so. Plow trucks have a plow wing on the passenger side of the truck. This plow wing makes sections of road with guardrails, trees, mailboxes, and especially bridges give the driver no place to go. Some areas like these are so narrow that with the wing down there is not enough room for the truck and a car. After several storms, already narrow residential streets can become even narrower. Again, please be patient. Snow removal personnel are trying to get the job done as quickly and as safely as possible.
5. Do not park in the street, on shoulders and/ or on sidewalks during storms or during snow removal operations. An overnight parking ban in the Town of Oakland is in effect from November 1 to March 31.
6. Do not shovel, plow, or blow snow onto roadways or sidewalks. **This is prohibited by law** and can cause a traffic hazard. It is best to place snow on the side of your driveway opposite the direction the plow approaches. This will allow the plow to carry snow away from your driveway instead of filling your driveway back in.
7. If possible, wait until roads have been plowed and pushed back before clearing your driveway. There is no practical way to clear streets without depositing snow in driveways. Snowbanks must be pushed back to provide drainage and room for the next storm. Please understand that the Town cannot and will not return and clear private driveways and private roads.

8. One real important issue we wish to remind parents about is the danger of children sliding into the roadway or building tunnels in the snowbanks. This could turn into a very serious situation that everyone wants to avoid. When our drivers are plowing or pushing snowbanks back visibility is restricted, and they will not know if there may be a child there. Please let your children know of the potential dangers during the storm and clean up period. The same danger will be there for your pets as well. You should always monitor the outdoor activities of your children and your pets.
9. Help reduce the possibility of a broken mailbox post. All plow drivers are instructed to avoid mailboxes when possible. Experience tells us that in reduced visibility this is not always possible. Often mailboxes are damaged by the weight of the snow coming off from the plow and not the plow itself. State law provides that any installation within the highway right-of-way, including mailboxes, is placed there at the owner's risk. Mailboxes should be placed at the maximum usable distance back from the pavement with a 42" mounting height from the bottom of the mailbox itself. Rotted wooden posts and cross arms, if equipped, should be **replaced prior** to the winter season. Please read the guidelines for mailboxes posted on the town's web page.
10. Again, please be patient. Plowing, sanding, and snow removal takes time. Our plow drivers are people with families, homes, and vehicles just like you. During storms of long duration, crews work around the clock until everything is done and then have to go home to clean up their driveways as well. Our primary mission is to make roadways safe for the traveling public at a reasonable cost to our taxpayers.

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## **WINTER PARKING BAN**

### Oakland Town Ordinance: **STREETS, SIDEWALKS, AND MUNICIPAL PARKING AREAS.**

Section A line 5:

It is unlawful for the operator or the owner of the vehicle to be parked on any street or town road between the hours of (12) twelve midnight and (6) six o'clock am from the first day of November on any year to the first of April in the following year.

No vehicle shall be parked at any other time on any public street, municipal parking lot, or public way so as to interfere with or hinder the removal of snow from the street, municipal parking lot, or public way by the town, plowing, loading or hauling. The Chief of Police or his designee may cause any vehicle so parked on any street, municipal parking lot, or public way, so as to interfere with or hinder the removal of snow by the town by plowing, loading, or hauling, to be removed from that area at the expense of the owner of such vehicle and without the town being liable for any damage that may have been caused by such removal, according to the provisions of section F.