



## GOODHUE COUNTY PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT SNOW REMOVAL POLICY SYNOPSIS Adopted June 2004

The main purpose for this policy is to give the citizens of Goodhue County a realistic expectation of the snow and ice removal services that will be provided by Goodhue County.

The general goal of the Department is to keep the county roads passable during the most heavily traveled periods of the day. Roads are prioritized by traffic volume and logical routing. On each road the three priorities are:

1. Make the road passable.
2. Widen the lanes and apply abrasive/chemical mixture.
3. Clean up.

Goodhue County has 16 snow removal vehicles and 17 operators, therefore, coverage and cycle time is limited. Operator duty shifts are generally limited to a maximum of 12 hours per day for safety reasons, therefore, many routes will not have coverage from late afternoon to early the next morning.

Plows will generally be dispatched between 4:00 a.m. and 7:00 a.m., or when snow and drifting conditions allow reasonable accomplishments to be made. Operations will be halted when service levels are reached, coverage time has elapsed, conditions are too hazardous, or if reasonable accomplishments can not be made. Weekends and holidays may receive a reduced level of service.

**Emergency Calls:** Snow plow crews will *not* be dispatched at night on most roads except for true emergency calls, such as assisting fire departments, ambulance crews, or searching for known stranded motorists. Icing bridges or snow drifting on roads are an expected aspect of winter travel and generally are not adequate justification to dispatch the snow plow crews. Note that in no case is 24 hour a day coverage time provided, due to lower traffic volumes, limited resources available and operator safety concerns.

*Phone Numbers: During Office Hours (Monday – Friday 7:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.) call Public Works at (651) 385-3025 (please note the new phone number), otherwise call the Sheriff Department at (651) 385-3155.*

These are **GENERAL** guidelines used by the Goodhue County Public Works department. Each decision to mobilize, to keep the snow plow crews working, and to apply chemicals is a judgment call based on the particular weather conditions, past experience, the availability of resources at that particular time and therefore may not adhere strictly to this general policy.

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## GOODHUE COUNTY PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

### SNOW AND ICE CONTROL POLICY Adopted June 2004

#### PURPOSE

To give the citizens of Goodhue County a realistic expectation of the snow and ice removal services to be provided by Goodhue County. Snow and ice removal operations will be provided in a reasonable, safe, and cost effective manner. The safety of the traveling public and the plow operators are a paramount concern in establishing this policy.

#### GENERAL

The Goodhue County Board of Commissioners realize that a large segment of the local economy is based on highway transportation and the county must utilize reasonable means to minimize hazards, slippery road surfaces, costly delays, and abnormal energy usage by the highway user. The Board of Commissioners establishes the policy and provides personnel, equipment, and funds. It is then the duty of the County Engineer to enforce the policy and to operate the Public Works Department in the most efficient, forthright and unbiased manner possible, given the resources available. The County Engineer and designated staff are the only ones authorized to mobilize the snow removal crew.

**The public is reminded of Minnesota's basic speed law which requires motorists to drive at a speed that is reasonable and prudent for conditions, to be aware of the actual and potential hazards on the highway and to use due care in operating their vehicle.**

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#### SNOW AND ICE REMOVAL GUIDELINES

Safety for the motorist and serviceability of county highways are the primary objectives of this maintenance activity. Removal of snow and ice from the roadway is a priority operation of the maintenance crew, and takes precedence over other work until the specified Levels of Service are reached.

## 1. Dispatching of Snowplows

- a. Snowplowing operations should begin after any appreciable accumulation of snow or ice which may cause hazardous road conditions if the storm begins during normal working hours. If appreciable accumulation of snow causing hazardous road conditions occurs during off hours, plows generally will be dispatched between 4:00 a.m. and 7:00 a.m. or when snow and drifting conditions allow reasonable accomplishments to be made.
- b. Goodhue County operates under a limited budget with a limited number of snow plows and snow plow operators. Goodhue County has 16 snow removal vehicles and 17 operators to cover 400 highway miles, therefore, cycle time and coverage time is limited. Operations may continue as long as adequate visibility permits, reasonable results are obtained, and staff is available. During lengthy storms, department management will determine when overtime is warranted. Operator duty shifts are generally limited to a maximum of 12 hours per day for safety reasons, therefore, many routes may not have any coverage from late afternoon to early the next morning.
- c. Weekends and holidays may receive a reduced level of service, due to lower traffic volumes and the limited resources available.
- d. **Nighttime operations will be held to a minimum, due to a lack of personnel and safety concerns. Snow plow crews will *not* be dispatched at night except for true emergency calls such as assisting fire departments, ambulance crews, or searching for known stranded motorists. Icing bridges or snow drifting on roads are an expected aspect of winter travel and generally are not adequate justification to dispatch the snow plow crews. Note that due to limited resources available, and operator safety concerns, 24 hour a day coverage time will *not* be provided.**
- e. For snow crew mobilizations occurring outside of normal work hours, approximately one hour will lapse between the time operators are called to when the plows will arrive on the roads.
- f. Snow and ice removal operations must be performed in a manner that will provide reasonable safety for the public, as well as for the employees. Operations will be halted when it is deemed too hazardous for the plow operators or if reasonable accomplishments can not be made.

## 2. Operation Guidelines

The general goal of the Goodhue County Public Works Department is to keep the county roads passable during the most heavily traveled periods of the day. Roadways should be cleared and widened out as soon as is reasonably possible with the resources available. Generally, it takes the plows approximately three hours to cover the entire route once. Roads are prioritized by traffic volume and logical routing. On each road the three priorities are:

- a. **Make the Road Passable** by clearing one lane in each direction.
- b. **Widen the lanes** out to the edge of shoulders and apply abrasive/chemical mixture. Sand/salt is applied at problem locations on paved roads including intersections (where stopping on the County Road is required), curves, hills, bridges and straight sections of the heavily traveled highways.

- c. **Clean up** involves the removal of ice and slush from the roadway after the salt and sun have been allowed to work. After these tasks have been completed, snow banks will be removed from bridges and plate beam guardrails, as they are prioritized. Entire sections of heavily traveled roadways may be sanded. (Clean up activities will be limited or postponed when temperatures drop well below zero.)

**3. Level of Service Guidelines**

The Level of Service is dependent on the roadways' classification. Recommended levels of service are shown in Table A and shall be interpreted as guidelines for maintenance operations. It is expected that management will continue to exercise judgment in situations where maintenance requirements differ from the guidelines. It is expected that there would be several severe storms during a typical winter when the recommended Levels of Service could not be attained before crews are withdrawn. Once the Level of Service has been reached and maintained, normal schedules will be resumed.

**TABLE A**

<b>CLASSIFICATION</b>	<b>RECOMMENDED LEVELS OF SERVICE</b>
Arterials and Collectors	All lanes should have substantially bare wheel paths with intermittent bare pavement within 48 hours after the end of snow fall and blowing snow.
Paved Local Roads	Both lanes should have one wheel path in each lane with intermittent bare pavement and sanded hills and curves within 72 hours after the end of snow fall and blowing snow.
Aggregate Surfaced Local Roads	On gravel roads compacted snow is acceptable with intersections sanded or rocked.

**4. Night Routes**

The following routes have required additional services during the evening hours due to high traffic during those hours:

- CSAH 7 from TH 19 to TH 61
- CSAH 18 from TH 61 to the north county line
- CSAH 66 from CSAH 1 to Twin Bluff Road
- CSAH 1 from CR 53 to TH 61
- CSAH 24 from TH 52 to TH 19
- County Road 53 from Mill Road to TH 61
- Occasionally on CSAH 21 from TH 58 to TH 61

**5. Chemical Usage Guidelines**

- a. The type and amount of chemical to be used in ice and snow control operations should correspond to such variable factors as traffic volume, temperature (rising or falling), type and amount of precipitation, type and amount of accumulation, wind velocity and direction which may blow snow over the roads, the likelihood of trapping subsequent snowfall on the road surface, weather forecasts, etc. Chemical applications should be restricted to amounts necessary to meet the Level of Service requirements. Usage of chemicals shall comply with Minnesota Statute 160.215.

- b. It is not possible to predetermine precisely when, where or the amount of chemicals with abrasives are to be placed on the roadway. Each road in each snow event must be judged on its own merits with consideration for the traction needed by the traveling public using that particular roadway at that particular time.
- c. Deicing salt becomes ineffective as pavement temperatures fall below 20 degrees. Therefore roads may remain snow packed during cold temperatures. Motor graders may be used to scrape the packed snow and sand may be applied to increase traction.

**6. Personal Properties**

- a. Mailboxes and fences damaged during snow removal will be evaluated on a case by case basis. **Only** those mailboxes and fences that were properly located and installed, and which were damaged by actual contact with County equipment will be repaired at the County's expense. The mail box owner is responsible for repair or replacement of the mailbox if the mailbox was damaged by the pressure of the plowed snow and there was no physical contact with the plow equipment.
- b. As snow is plowed from roadways, windrows will be created at the end of driveways and are the property owner's responsibility to clear. Residents are also reminded that it is unlawful for them to plow or blow snow from driveways onto or across county roads.
- c. Residents must remove parked vehicles from county roads to assist in snow removal.
- d. Public Works department personnel may assist stranded motorists by contacting law enforcement/emergency personnel, but will not attempt to remove stuck or stranded vehicles except in extreme emergency situations.

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