

# DODGE COUNTY HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT SNOW REMOVAL POLICY

Emergencies should be reported to the Dodge County Sheriff's office, 507-635-6200. For Statewide road conditions, call 1-800-542-0220.

**PURPOSE:** To give the citizens of Dodge County a realistic expectation of the snow and ice removal services that will be provided during the winter season. This policy synopsis is to be used as an educational tool for the increased safety of the traveling public throughout Dodge County.

**GOAL:** The general goal of the Department is to keep the county roads passable during the most heavily traveled periods of the week. 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.

## OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES

Dodge County has 10 snow removal vehicles and only 12 operators, therefore, coverage time is limited to 8 hours/weekday on low traffic volume roads and up to 12 hours/weekday on a very few high traffic volume roads. Operator duty shifts are generally limited to a maximum of 12 hours per day for safety reasons; therefore, most routes will not have coverage between 5:00 p.m. and 5:00 a.m. the next morning.

On weekdays plows will be dispatched between 5:00 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 too hazardous or if reasonable accomplishments cannot be made.

Weekends and holidays will receive a reduced level of service, due to lower traffic volumes and the limited resources available.

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.

**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.*

Phone Numbers: during Office Hours (Monday - Friday 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.) call the Highway Department at (507) 374-6694, otherwise call the Sheriff Department at (507)635-6200.

These are **GENERAL** guidelines used by the Dodge County Highway Department. Each decision to mobilize the snow plow crews is a judgement call based on the particular weather conditions combined with past experience along with the resources available at the time and therefore may not adhere strictly to this general policy.

# Frequently Asked Questions

## **When does plowing begin?**

The County will not usually dispatch plows until after a snowfall has stopped. Exceptions may be made during extended snowfalls, but plows will not be sent out in hazardous conditions. If snowfall stops during regular working hours, plows may be dispatched at that time. If the snowfall stops during the night or early morning, plows will be dispatched after 5:00 a.m. to accommodate the traveling public. Weekend plowing is at a reduced level.

## **What gets plowed?**

Dodge County has nearly 700 lane miles of roads that are maintained. Roads are prioritized according to traffic and area served such as schools and emergency services.

## **What is the plowing procedure**

The County does not assure a completely bare road and it will not sand entire sections of roadway. County plows phase their operation in the following manner:

1. Make the road passable by cleaning one lane in each direction.
2. Widen the lanes to the edge of the shoulders. Sanding takes place at problem locations, including intersections, curves, hills and bridges. Salt mixture varies with temperature and road condition.
3. Cleanup, during which ice and slush are removed and the sun is allowed to do its work.

## **What about property damage caused by plowing?**

Fence and mailbox damage: the County will repair at its expense only authorized fences and boxes that are properly located and installed and which were damaged by actual contact with County equipment. Damage resulting from snow flying from the plow is not the responsibility of the County.

## **What is my responsibility?**

County residents are reminded that it is unlawful to plow snow from driveways onto or across County roads. Piles of snow left on or near the road can freeze into a solid mass, creating a hazardous situation for vehicles and snowplows. Accidents and damages caused by snow piles placed in the roadway may result in liability to the property owner. As snow is plowed from roadways, County operators leave as little snow as possible across driveways. County removal of this snow is not feasible and is the property owner's responsibility.

## **What about parked vehicles?**

County residents are reminded to remove parked vehicles from County roads so as to assist in snow removal. Within city limits the County plows only the center 24 feet and the snow is piled in what may be considered parking lanes.

## **What if I get stranded or stuck?**

The County Highway Department may assist stranded motorists by contacting law enforcement/emergency personnel. The department will not attempt to remove stuck vehicles from ditches, snow banks or any other impediment.

## **What about sidewalks?**

Sidewalks on County or County State Aid Highways within Municipalities are the responsibility of the Municipality.