

TOWN OF NORTH HERO PUBLIC WORKS WINTER ROAD MAINTENANCE POLICY

The North Hero Public Works Winter Road Maintenance Policy is based on the goal of obtaining safe highway travel surfaces during the winter months. It is our goal to achieve this at the earliest practical time and in the most cost efficient manner during and after a storm event. Providing bare dry travel surfaces during a winter storm event is not practical and therefore not expected.

There are many variables affecting winter road maintenance operations such as the type of precipitation, air and pavement temperature, traffic volume, wind, time of day and even the day of the week. The type and volume of traffic and road gradient are the primary factors in determining the order of winter road maintenance service, therefore, during periods of time when school is in session, top priority is given to clearing the roads utilized by the school busses.

Emergency service buildings shall receive the necessary maintenance required to provide for emergency personnel to arrive and for vehicles to depart and return safely. As necessary, snow and ice control equipment shall be redirected by the Public Works Foreman from assigned routes to assist emergency response vehicles in reaching their destination. Roads heavily used by commuters and hills are next in terms of priority.

Each winter storm event is unique, thus it is impractical to develop specific rules on winter maintenance operations. The judgment of the Public Works Foreman often governs the quantity and type of applications used to control snow and ice. Public safety is always our top priority.

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT CALL OUTS

The Public Works Department's regular working hours are 6:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. All Public Works Department employees are standby 24 hours per day, 7 days per week from October 15th through May 1st. In the event of a winter storm event that occurs during weekend or evening hours, the Public Works Foreman will make the decision to mobilize in consultation with whomever else in the Public Works Department is on call and with other transportation emergency service officials as deemed fit. The determination will be based on the time of day, condition of roads, and the predicted duration and the intensity of storms.

PLOWING OPERATIONS

Plowing operations are generally initiated after 2 to 4 inches of snow has fallen and may continue until the storm has concluded. It is expected that each plow route will take 4 hours or less to complete.

For light accumulation snowfalls and snow squalls plowing may begin immediately and may include simultaneous salting and/or sanding to provide the desired results quickly and efficiently. Snow squalls, which occur after 10:00 p.m. and produce only a light accumulation, may not require immediate attention because of light traffic. Such light accumulation may be cleared very early the following morning, no later than 5:00 a.m. and this will be at the discretion of the Public Works Foreman.

Excessive overtime hours for Public Works Department employees are also a consideration. State of Vermont guidelines for highway departments require employees to have at least four hours of rest after a sixteen (16) hour shift. During a prolonged snow storm event we will clear all of the roads and intersections but we may not apply sand until after a four (4) hour rest period. Hills, intersections, and curves may be cleared before the shift ends, depending on their condition. Widening and intersection view clearing is performed following the storm and generally during daylight hours.

GUIDELINES FOR THE TOWN'S RIGHT OF WAY

The town will pursue recovery for damages if Town equipment is damaged by objects placed in the right of way. Pursuant to Title 23, Vermont Statutes Annotated Chapter 13 § 1126(a), **no person shall place (or cause to be placed) snow or ice within the Town's right of way for any reason.** This policy shall apply to any person engaged in personal or commercial snowplowing operations, who by the removal of snow from a residence or commercial building causes snow and/or ice to be placed in the Town right of way.

Additionally, and in line with this policy, the Town of North Hero prohibits the placement of trash or recycling bins (or any other object) in the Town right of way from October 15th through May 1st. During this period of time trash or recycling bins may be placed at the end of the driveway, but outside of the Town right of way, and therefore might have to be placed in the driveway area instead of on the side of the road where the snow has been cleared by the Town.

During maintenance operations of any season, the Town of North Hero will not be responsible for any damage or destruction of appurtenances placed within the Town's right of way. Appurtenances include, but are not limited to: trees, shrubs, flowers, grass, fences, stone walls, and stone posts. It is the Town's policy to use special care and consideration when plowing in the vicinity of mailbox supports.

Despite this care and consideration, some mailboxes may be damaged or destroyed during the snow removal season. In the vast majority of cases, it is the weight of the snow coming off of the plow or wing blade that damages a mailbox, especially when oncoming traffic makes it impossible for the plow operator to swerve around the support. **Please see the Town of North Hero Rural Mailbox Placement Specifications & Reimbursement Policy below for specific guidelines on placement of a mailbox.** The replacement of a mailbox or support does not take priority over snow plowing, sanding, salting or any other high priority winter maintenance operations and a postal customer may have to pick up mail at the Post Office until the mailbox is back in place. The Town shall have no responsibility for clearing away snow from the entrances of private driveways that accumulates as a result of highway plowing operations.

RURAL MAILBOX PLACEMENT SPECIFICATIONS & REIMBUREMENT POLICY

The Town of North Hero requires rural mailboxes to be mounted on a steel pipe 1-1/2" inside diameter or larger, a 4x4 or larger wooden post, or a standard of equivalent strength, set at least two and one half (2.5) feet into the ground. The leading edge of the mailbox itself should be between two and one half (2.5) and three (3) feet outside of the pavement or of the regularly traveled surface of a

gravel or dirt road. The bottom of the mailbox, or the support that it is resting on, should be between forty-eight (48) and fifty (50) inches above the surface of the adjacent roadway so that the plow may pass completely underneath without hitting an obstruction. Adherence to these specifications will be required prior to any assistance from the Town of North Hero being authorized to repair or replace any rural mailbox damage that is a direct result of winter road maintenance operations.

Any request for reimbursement for damages must be made in writing to the Selectboard. The owner of a damaged mailbox, including 'custom' mailboxes, will be entitled to a maximum reimbursement of \$30.00. Furthermore, the Town of North Hero Public Works Foreman may, as he is performing his duties, provide notice to any party who has a mailbox that is not in compliance that they need to bring the mailbox into compliance in order to increase the safety of winter road maintenance operations.

SALT APPLICATION

Salt is used to reduce the adherence of snow to pavement thereby improving the ability of snowplows to remove it from the road surface. It is the position of the Public Works Department that salt combined with snowplowing is the safest, most efficient de-icing method available. It is the policy of this department to use only sufficient salt to restore safe travel conditions after a storm. It will be applied to paved roads and a minimum amount of sand will be applied as necessary. Salt is not effective when road temperatures are below ten (10) degrees. Some particles of salt may be as large as three-quarters (.75) of an inch in diameter and may cause windshield or other types of damage. Travelers should use caution and avoid following other vehicles, especially Town trucks, too closely. The Town will not pay for any vehicle damage including, but not limited to, the repair or replacement of a windshield where such damage is alleged to be caused by the transportation of, or application of salt to road surfaces.

SAND APPLICATION

Sand is primarily utilized to improve the safety of the travel surface following a storm. Generally, sand is applied after the conclusion of plowing operations. Sand will be applied to paved surfaces, and as with salt, it will only be applied in the amount necessary to restore safe travel conditions. Some particles of sand may be as large as three-quarters (.75) of an inch in diameter and may cause windshield or other types of damage. Travelers should use caution and avoid following other vehicles, especially Town trucks, too closely. The Town will not pay for any vehicle damage including, but not limited to, the repair or replacement of a windshield where such caused by the transportation of, or application of sand to road surfaces.

ICE AND FREEZING RAIN

Frozen precipitation, including sleet and the buildup of ice caused by freezing rain is a special situation and is not subject to the procedures outlined above. For example, when a changeover from

snow to sleet to freezing rain is predicted or anticipated, snow and/or sleet may be left on the pavement to capture the freezing rain to prevent the accumulation of glare ice.

PARKING

Parking is not allowed along roadsides or in public areas from November 1st to April 30th from 1:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. and any vehicles that need to be removed will be done so at the expense of the owner.

GENERAL PROVISIONS

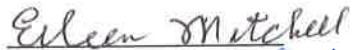
Experience based judgment is essential in conducting and timing winter road maintenance operations. The Town of North Hero Public Works Foreman is empowered to enforce the provisions of this policy and is given wide latitude and discretion to make the decisions he or she deem fit to respond to a winter storm event. Evaluations of the Public Works Foreman are performed by the Selectboard either at the conclusion of a specific winter storm event, or at any other time deemed necessary by the Selectboard. These evaluations may be performed with input from the general public based on personal observations, or by the observations of the Selectboard. The goal of these evaluations will be to provide guidance and instruction to the Public Works Foreman should they encounter similar events in the future.


The Road Commissioner or a designated representative is authorized to use reasonable discretion in resolving matters involving unusual circumstances.

Once adopted, this policy supersedes any and all other highway maintenance policies, should they exist, whether in writing or otherwise.


Adopted by the Town of North Hero Selectboard on May 21, 2018.

North Hero Selectboard


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