

## **PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT WINTER ROADS OPERATING PROCEDURE**

The Public Works Department (PWD) maintains approximately 120 centerline miles of Town roads during the winter.

**WHEN A STORM BEGINS** - For nights and weekend storms, the PWD relies on the Police Department to call our Director or Foreman when the road conditions deteriorate. Sometimes, however, the Public Works Director may call some plow units out earlier if ice or severe weather is forecast. When the snowstorms begin, all of our units are called. The major roads are Priority One (Major roads are determined by traffic volume and time of day). Priority One roads are plowed and pretreated with salt and calcium chloride when liquid additive is needed. Calcium Chloride is only used with very cold temperatures when salt will not work alone. We only use approximately 600 gallons of calcium chloride per season, or about five gallons per mile of road all season. **(Note. For more information on winter road treatment go to <http://mcspolicycenter.umaine.edu/?q=RoadSalt> for a study conducted by the University of Maine).** This liquid is also treated with a rust inhibitor before we accept delivery. This treatment prevents bonding of snow and ice to the pavement. Priority Two roads are plowed and sanded with sand/salt mix to also help prevent bonding of ice and snow. Priority Three roads are plowed and sanded with straight sand as needed after Priority One and Priority Two roads are safe for travel. Our goal is to keep the roads as safe as possible, and we try to keep the snow or ice from bonding and packing to the pavement.

**AS THE STORM CONTINUES** - Our primary goal is to keep the travel lanes free of snow and ice buildup and ice from bonding to the road. If snow becomes extremely heavy, we have to again prioritize how we plow roads by traffic volume and time of day. If needed, we may have extra plow operators come to help on secondary roads. We continue to plow until the storm subsides, or until the drivers have made their plow routes safe for the night. The crew will normally go home for sleep between 10 pm and 4 am. If needed, a few substitute operators will keep main roads plowed during this time and respond to any emergencies. When the operators have their plow routes in a safe condition at the end of the storm all roads are re-treated with sand, salt, or combination of both. At this time snow banks are pushed back as far as possible to make room for more plowing and make room for water runoff during thaw cycles. This may sometimes happen the day after the storm, depending on how many hours the crew has worked.

**ROAD CLEANUP** - After the storm, cleanup continues with plowing snowdrifts and widening all roads as needed. It may take several days to completely

push all snow off the road shoulders.

**SIDEWALKS** - During the storm, our sidewalk plow starts clearing snow when the Director sees the need to clear sidewalks. Again, this is determined by snow intensity, time of day, and sidewalk traffic. Some sidewalks near the roadways become covered with snow when the plow trucks clean streets. Those sidewalks are cleared as soon as possible after the storm and any others with accumulation. Our priority is to clear the sidewalks near the schools and churches. The downtown area sidewalks that are not the responsibility of the area businesses are cleared as soon as possible. We have over 7 miles of sidewalks. Again, depending on the storm intensity more than one day may be needed to accomplish clearing the sidewalks.

**SNOW REMOVAL** - The PWD recognizes that businesses in the downtown area rely on clean streets for parking. So, within 48 hours of a major storm, the snow is removed in the downtown area during the hours between midnight and 7 am. Side streets such as Quebec and Middle, and parts of other in-town streets are cleared as soon as possible after the downtown area is cleared of snow; sometimes on the same night or the following night. Other areas, such as public parking lots, are done during the nighttime snow removal hours. The public needs to be aware that there is a parking ban in Farmington and any vehicles parked on the streets or sidewalks during the ban hours may be towed at the owner's expense.

**PARKING BAN** - The Town of Farmington has a Parking Ban in town between November 15th and April 15th. Main Street bans parking between the hours of 10 pm and 6 am. On other in-town streets the ban is between the hours of midnight and 6 am. This includes the public parking areas. These bans are necessary to keep streets clear of vehicles so the streets can be plowed and sanded and the sidewalks cleared in the event of a snow storm. For more specifics, see Section 12-3.9 in Farmington's Traffic Ordinance Publication.

**CATCH BASINS** - Most of us forget about the catch basins in the height of winter. But should we get any rain, those catch basins are needed for drainage and to prevent the streets from icing. So, if you have a catch basin near your property, would you please keep it clear? That would be a tremendous help to the Public Works crew as our Department is responsible for over 600 basins.

### **TAXPAYER RESPONSIBILITY**

**MAILBOXES** - The PWD gets as close as possible to your mailbox without damaging it. It is your responsibility to keep it clear. The box and the post may be damaged by the plow, but more often it is the weight of the snow

being pushed back that damages the box. We suggest a post set back from the road edge 6 feet, with the mailbox suspended on chains from a yardarm at 39" to 42" off the ground, as required by the U.S. Postal Service for rural delivery. If mailbox damage occurs during a storm, please call 778-2191 so we can remind plow operators to be more careful. Mailboxes, however, are located in the Town right-of-way at the owner's risk.

It is unlawful for any person to place or cause to be placed or deposited, by motor vehicle or otherwise, any snow or ice onto any public right-of-way, which includes sidewalks. (Title 29-A M.R.S.A., Section 2396.4)

**HELPFUL HINTS** - If you are clearing the end of the driveway, put the removed snow on the side of your driveway opposite the direction from which the plow is coming. The plow will carry the snow away from your driveway. Otherwise, the snow will again fill your driveway entrance. Keeping a space clear before your driveway or walk minimizes the amount of snow falling into your driveway or walk. If possible, wait until the highway has been plowed before cleaning out the end of your driveway or walk. There is no practical way to plow the highway without depositing snow into your driveway. Please understand the Town of Farmington is required by law to keep roads and sidewalks plowed and sanded.