

City of Oak Creek – Winter Operations: Snow & Ice Control Policy

Effective Date: January 1, 2025

Department of Public Works

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide a clear, consistent framework for snow and ice control in Oak Creek. The objective is to maintain safe and reasonably passable public streets, sidewalks and public facilities during winter weather, enabling emergency access and protecting public safety while balancing environmental stewardship and cost-effectiveness.

Objectives

- Reduce the risk to the traveling public on city streets and public rights-of-way.
- Ensure emergency response access (fire, police, ambulance) is prioritized during and after snow/ice events.
- Use resources (personnel, equipment, materials) efficiently and effectively.
- Minimize the environmental impact of winter by using the least amount of salt or other de-icing chemicals that is effective in clearing the city streets and public rights-of-way.
- Encourage resident cooperation (parking restrictions, sidewalk clearing) to facilitate operations.

Scope

This policy applies to:

- All public streets maintained by the City of Oak Creek.
- City-owned parking lots and public facility lots.
- Primary sidewalks and pedestrian paths adjacent to city facilities.

It **does not** apply to:

- Private streets, private parking lots, individual driveways.
- Snow/ice control on private property (except as required by local sidewalk ordinance or snow emergency).

Authority & Coordination

- The Director of Public Works (or designee) has the authority to initiate, direct, suspend or modify snow and ice operations.
- The Streets Division is responsible for executing the operations and coordinating with Parks & Open Space, Forestry, and Street Lighting Divisions as needed.

- Coordination with the Milwaukee County Department of Transportation is required when county or state roads intersect city operations.
- Residents will be notified of snow emergencies, parking restrictions and major operations via the City website, social media and local news outlets.

Levels of Service & Route Priorities

The City will classify routes and operations into the following priorities for snow and ice control.

Priority 1 – Arterial & Emergency Routes

- Includes major collector/arterial streets, routes to hospitals, fire and police stations, emergency service access and primary school/transportation routes.
- Goal: Restore bare pavement or safe driving conditions as soon as practical following the end of the event.
- Operations: Begin plowing and salting as soon as snowfall warrants; continuous operations during storms.

Priority 2 – Secondary Collectors & School Routes

- Streets connecting neighborhoods to the arterial network, and those serving schools, business districts.
- Goal: Passable vehicle travel within 6–8 hours after storm ends (conditions permitting).
- Operations: Cleared once Priority 1 routes are stabilized.

Priority 3 – Residential Streets & Cul-de-sacs

- Local neighborhood streets, lower-volume roads, cul-de-sacs.
- Goal: Passable travel (single lane) within 12 hours after storm ends (conditions permitting). Residual snow may remain; full bare pavement may take longer depending on storm size.
- Operations: Plowed to provide safe travel and access; some snow accumulation may remain until warmer conditions.

Priority 4 – Sidewalks, Trails & City Parking Lots

- City-owned sidewalks adjacent to major facilities, trails, parking lots.
- Goal: Cleared as resources permit following roadway operations; high-use pedestrian paths prioritized.
- Operations: Salting or plowing as needed; pedestrian safe travel prioritized.

Snow Removal Operations

- Plowing (mechanical removal of snow) will begin when snow accumulation on Priority 1 routes reaches approximately 1/2 inch or when drifting or other hazards develop.
- Snow is pushed toward curbs or shoulders; residual windrows at driveways are unavoidable and property owners are responsible for clearing.
- Cul-de-sacs will be cleared with appropriate equipment to provide safe access; full bare pavement may not always be immediately achieved depending on conditions.
- In the Drexel Town Square commercial area or business districts, snow may be hauled away to provide space for parking and pedestrian access, particularly for high-traffic areas.
- Equipment may operate in shifts as required for larger storms; overtime and additional personnel may be used in major events.

Ice Control Operations

- Pre-treatment (anti-icing) may occur on Priority 1 and Priority 2 routes using brine or treated salt before storms to inhibit bonding of snow/ice to pavement.
- De-icing materials (salt, salt brine, calcium chloride and organics) will be applied during or after storms and when refreeze conditions create hazards.
- Application rates will be adjusted based on pavement temperature, pavement condition, storm type, and environmental best practices.
- Material storage, calibrations and application records will be maintained to ensure accountability and efficiency.

Sidewalks, Trails & Pedestrian Facilities

- The City of Oak Creek enforces resident responsibility for sidewalk clearing adjacent to private properties. Property owners must remove snow/ice from that portion of sidewalk within **24 hours** after snow/ice accumulation.
- The City will clear its own facility-adjacent sidewalks and high-use trails as described in Priority 4.
- Placement of snow from private property onto public sidewalks, streets or trails is prohibited.

Parking Restrictions & Resident Responsibilities

- Winter parking restrictions in Oak Creek: From **December 1 through March 31**, no parking is allowed on any city street:
 - Monday through Friday: 2:00 a.m. – 6:00 a.m.

- Saturday & Sunday: 2:30 a.m. – 6:00 a.m.
- During a declared snow emergency, vehicles cannot be parked on any street or public way until the emergency is lifted.
- Residents must not shovel or push snow from private driveways or sidewalks into the street, public way or onto city-plow zones.
- Property owners must ensure mailboxes and fire hydrants on or adjacent to their property are accessible and clear of snow to facilitate plowing and emergency access.
- Vehicles left parked contrary to restrictions may be ticketed or towed at owner’s expense.

Equipment, Materials & Fleet Management

- The Streets Division will maintain and inspect all snow/ice equipment prior to the winter season and throughout operations (plow trucks, loaders, salt-spreaders).
- Calibration of material application equipment will be completed to ensure proper application rates and tracking of materials (granular and liquid).
- Storage facilities for salt and brine must be maintained in accordance with environmental best practices to avoid stormwater runoff and contamination.
- Personnel will be trained annually in safety protocols, equipment use, environmental considerations, and snow/ice logistics.

Communication & Public Information

- The City’s website will include a “Snow Information” section under Public Works (www.oakcreekwi.gov).
- Emergency notifications (snow emergency declarations and parking bans) will be communicated via:
 - City website
 - Social media (City of Oak Creek official channels)
 - Local news outlets and radio where applicable
- Residents are encouraged to review the winter operations policy so expectations are clear.

Snow Emergency Procedures

- Mayor may declare a **Snow Emergency** when conditions warrant (e.g., heavy snowfall, rapid accumulation, drifting, serious icy conditions).
- When a Snow Emergency is declared:

- All vehicles must be removed from designated public streets/ways as directed.
- Parking restrictions beyond normal hours may be activated to allow full plow capability.
- The City may implement one-way traffic, route closures or other traffic control measures to facilitate plowing and/or snow removal.
- The Snow Emergency remains in effect until it is formally lifted and communicated.

Environmental & Safety Considerations

- De-icing and anti-icing applications will follow environmental best practices to minimize salt runoff into storm sewers and adjacent waterways.
- The City will monitor salt/spread quantities, train operators in efficient applications and consider technologies or practices to reduce overall material use.
- Safety training for staff will include winter driving, equipment operation, night operations, visibility, and pedestrian safety considerations.

Budget & Cost Recovery

- The DPW will maintain records of snow/ice removal costs (overtime, materials, equipment use) for annual review.
- In cases where private property obstructs plowing operations (e.g., illegal snow dumping into the street), the cost of remediation may be charged back to the property owner.
- Public Works will evaluate seasonal cost performance and identify opportunities for improved efficiency annually.

Review & Policy Update

- This policy shall be reviewed each year by the Director of Public Works prior to the winter season (ideally September/October).
- Updates in the policy may reflect: changes in equipment, materials, staffing, environmental regulations, or feedback from the community and Public Works operations.

Contact Information

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Website: www.oakcreekwi.gov — Snow Information section under Public Works.