

Snowplowing and Ice Control Policy

The City of Rice Lake, Minnesota, finds that it is in the best interest of the residents of the city to assume basic responsibility for control of snow and ice on city roads. Reasonable ice and snow control is necessary for routine travel and emergency services. The city will attempt to provide such control in a safe and cost-effective manner, keeping in mind safety, budget, personnel, and environmental concerns. The city will use city employees, equipment and/or private contractors to provide this service. This policy does not relieve the operator of private vehicles, pedestrians, property owners, residents and all others that may be using public streets, of their responsibility to act in a reasonable, prudent and cautious manner, given the prevailing street conditions.

Dispatching

The city, to the best of its ability, will try to maintain the roadways during snow periods. Operations will be halted when it is deemed too hazardous for our operators and the public or if reasonable accomplishments are not being met.

Snow events which occur during the night or early morning hours, plows will be dispatched. Weekend snowplowing will be handled if snow accumulations are 3" or more.

Snowplow Operations

Generally, plow operations will consist of three phases: making roads passable, widening and sanding, and general clean up.

Work Schedule for Snowplow Operators

Due to budget and safety concerns, no operator shall work more than a twelve-hour shift in any twenty-four-hour period. Operators will take a fifteen-minute break every two hours and a half-hour meal break after four hours. After a twelve-hour shift, the operators will be replaced if additional qualified personnel are available.

Traffic

The city recognizes that snowplow operators are exempt from traffic regulations set forth on Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 169 while actually engaged in work on streets, except for regulations related to driving while impaired and the safety of school children. Pursuant to this authority, snowplow operators engaged in snow removal or ice control on city roads have discretion to disregard traffic laws set forth in Chapter 169, except for laws relating to impaired driving and school children safety, when in their judgement, it is safe to disregard such laws. The privileges granted herein to operators of snow removal and ice control vehicles shall apply only if the vehicle is equipped with one lighted lamp displaying a flashing, oscillating, or rotating amber or blue light placed in such a position on the vehicle as to be visible throughout an arc of 360 degrees.

Weather Conditions

Snow and ice control operations will be conducted only when the weather conditions do not endanger the safety of snowplow operators and equipment. Factors that may delay snow and ice control operations include severe cold, significant winds, and limited visibility.

Use of Sand, Salt, and Other Chemicals

The city will use sand, salt, and other chemicals when there is hazardous ice or slippery conditions. The city is concerned about the effect of such chemicals on the environment, so

operators go through regularly scheduled training of best management practices for winter fleet operation/maintenance including smart salting.

Personal Property

Mailboxes and fences damaged during snow removal will be evaluated case by case. Only those mailboxes and fences that were properly located and installed and which were damaged by actual contact with the city's equipment will be repaired at the city's expense.

As snow is plowed from roadways, operators will try to leave as little snow as possible across driveways. City removal of this windrow is not feasible and remains the property owner's responsibility. Residents are also reminded that it is unlawful to plow or blow snow from driveways onto or across city roads.

Residents must remove parked vehicles from city roads to assist in snow removal.

City personnel may assist stranded motorists by contacting law enforcement/emergency personnel. The city will not attempt to remove stuck vehicles unless directed by law enforcement personnel to eliminate a safety hazard.

Complaint Procedure

Complaints will be recorded on telephone logs at the City Hall or Public Works Building. Calls requiring service will be transferred to a work request and forwarded to the appropriate supervisor for scheduling. Emergency complaints will be handled in an expeditious manner as resources are available.

Deviation from Policy

City Supervisors may deviate from this policy when, in his or her judgement, it is in the best interest of the city or is necessary because of budget needs or other circumstances.

Review and Modification of Policy

This policy will be reviewed periodically and take into consideration any comments or complaints since the last review and any other factors affecting the policy or its implementation.

Repealer

This policy hereby repeals and replaces any former Snowplowing Policy.

Effectuation

This policy is approved and adopted by Rice Lake City Council on February 24, 2025.

Suzanne Herstad, Mayor

Toni Blomdahl, City Administrator