



Town of Stow HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

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Superintendent of Streets

Stow Highway Department Storm Strategy

The Town of Stow Highway Department has over 60 miles of roadway to maintain. In an effort to make the snow season as safe and efficient as possible, we offer the following tips and information. Please keep in mind that every storm brings a different scenario so our strategy may be adjusted accordingly in order to achieve the best results.

The Stow Highway Department is devoted to providing the residents and motorists with dependable snow removal operations in the least amount of time. With your cooperation, we will all benefit during this snow season.

When the Storm Begins

When a snowstorm begins, this Department responds by treating road surfaces with deicing chemicals. Treating the road surface serves two purposes. It prevents snow and ice from bonding to the road surface, making it easier to plow off, and it helps to keep traffic flowing. Treating the road surfaces takes approximately 2 ½ - 3 hours. This Department will sometimes pre-treat road surfaces with liquid deicing chemicals, if timing and conditions allow for it. Please remember that our crew has to travel on snow covered, slippery untreated roads to get here at any hour of the day or night. Please be patient during this period as the crew will be out as soon as possible to begin their operations.

During the Storm

Plowing operations begin when there is an accumulation of 3 to 5 inches of snow on the road surfaces. Depending on the severity of the storm, Town forces are assisted by hired contractors to help expedite the process of snow removal. Each vehicle is assigned a predetermined route and will remain on that route until the storm subsides, unless an emergency occurs that requires reassignment of equipment from one location to another. The main objective is to keep all roads passable during the storm for the prudent motorist.

Please do not shovel, plow, or snow blow any snow or ice into the roadway. Not only is it illegal and can create a traffic hazard, but it also costs this department more money as these areas may need to be treated or plowed again to make them safe. If you have a private contractor plowing your driveway, please make sure to remind them of this, as you will be held responsible for their actions.

Once the storm has stopped, all roads are scraped off and widened sufficiently in anticipation of future storms and for public safety.

Following the Storm

After plowing is completed roads are given a final treatment of deicing chemicals as needed. In the days following the storm, scraping and treating of roads will continue, as needed depending on the weather forecasts. Roadside snow embankments also will be pushed back more as needed. This allows for any melting snow or rain to reach drainage structures and/or to be able to drain off of the roadside. As time allows, snow is also removed from intersections where sight distance may be a concern.

Fire Hydrants and Dry Hydrants

Fire hydrants and dry hydrants are under control of the Stow Fire Department and will be cleared when they feel it is necessary. Questions regarding snow removal around hydrants should be directed to the Stow Fire Department at (978)-897-4537.

Sand and Salt

A mixture of sand and salt is available to residents (**no contractors**) at the entrance to the Highway Department at 88 South Acton Road. There is a limit of two 5-gallon pails of sand per resident, per storm.

Town Right of Way

Homeowners should be aware that in most instances they do not own the land up to the edge of the road pavement. The Town generally owns the land 8 feet from the road edge. Homeowners should be careful as to what is placed within these areas. Trees, shrubbery, fences, lawn sprinkler systems and gardens (all of which require permits from the Town to install) within the right of way may be damaged during snow removal operations. The Town will not be held responsible for damage to such items within the right of way.

Mailboxes and Basketball Nets

The Town of Stow does not replace or repair mailboxes or their posts. Mailboxes installed within the town right of way or on private ways are placed at the homeowner's risk. The snowplow operators do not deliberately knock down or damage mailboxes. The primary cause of mailbox loss is from the weight of the snow being thrown off of the plow. Please be sure to check the condition of your mailbox and post before winter. It will only benefit you to do so.

Basketball nets and posts that have been placed on the edge of the road and overhang roads to be plowed are another area of concern for snowplow operators. These must be removed before winter as they could cause damage to town vehicles. Again, the Town cannot be held responsible for damage to these items and will remove them if they interfere with snow removal operations.

Spring Time Repairs

Sometimes the grass strips and curbs along the roads are damaged while plowing. The Highway Department works to repair these areas as soon as possible; however other work that involves the safety of the public takes priority. It may take until mid summer to repair these areas. If your landscaping needs are such that this is unacceptable, **you may choose to repair these areas on your own.**

Street Sweeping

Part of the Highway Department's maintenance program involves cleaning the road surfaces and drains of the sand that was spread during the winter. The Town's street sweeper cleans the road surfaces during the spring months (end of March to the middle of June). The Highway Department first cleans the highly visible areas such as the Town center and the Lower Village. The remainder of the town is divided into 6 sectors, which are rotated annually in the cleaning cycle. To comply with environmental regulations, some areas of Town and some roads are swept 2 or 3 times to help further protect our wetlands and streams. The Highway crews do not rake the sand and grass from the shoulder adjacent to the roads. Residents, however, may rake sand onto the road surface for pick up by the street sweeper **before the road is swept.** Place sand into a row rather than a pile and do not mix lawn waste, trash, and tree limbs and debris with the sand. These items may cause damage to the sweeper. The operator will not remove such material, leaving an unsightly mess for you and your neighbors to view.

The Stow Highway Department takes great pride in our well maintained, clean, attractive streets. Your continued cooperation will help keep our Town safe and attractive. Your help is much appreciated.