

Guide to Winter Operations



Winter storms can be trying for all of us, motorists, residents and snowplow operators alike. The goal of the Public Works Department is to remove snow and ice from our roadways as rapidly and efficiently as possible while keeping roads open and essential traffic moving. This does not mean bare, dry pavement should be expected after each snowstorm. The aim of snow and ice control operations is to return road surfaces to normal winter conditions as soon as possible.

Our primary goal during a storm is to maintain passable roads so that police, fire, and ambulances can have access to residents. The secondary goal is to treat ice and plow snow in order to provide safe passage for school buses as well as the general public.

The DPW is prepared to adapt to a variety of conditions during a snow or ice storm. There are several variables that affect how we deal with a storm such as, air temperature fluctuations, wind speed, moisture, time of day, forecast and duration.

A dedicated group of Town employees is devoted to working “around the clock” in order to return our roadways to normal conditions after each snow/ice event as quickly as possible. As always, your cooperation is necessary for the successful completion of this important task.

The intensity, timing and duration of each storm can vary dramatically, however, as a storm begins, the following procedures are followed as closely as possible.

Procedures:

All storm conditions are influenced by temperature, the amount of moisture present in the storm, wind speed and duration. The combinations of these factors form the conditions that determine how each event will be addressed. Freezing rain, sleet, wet snow, dry snow, amount of snow, wind conditions, and the time of day all contribute to storm conditions.

The Storm Begins:

The DPW responds by treating roads with salt. This application provides traction and prevents snow from bonding to the pavement. Not all roads can be treated “first”. Pretreating the entire Town roadway system takes approximately 3 hours.

Plowing:

This operation begins when 1-2” inches accumulate. In combination with contracted equipment, Town vehicles are assigned to a predetermined route and will remain in their pattern until the storm subsides. Initially, plows make passes in both directions to open up the center of the street for emergency and other vehicles. After all public ways are “opened up” plows will return to widen out all roads curb-to-curb and begin to widen intersections.

We make every effort to minimize the snow plowed into driveways, but this is unavoidable. Plow drivers cannot lift the plow blades as they pass driveways. It is the property owner’s responsibility to clear their own driveway and it is your choice when to do this.

Note: It is prudent for residents to wait to clear their walks and driveways until the road has been widened.

Town Bylaw: Chapter 205, Section 11 “Placement of Snow and Ice on Public Ways”: No person shall plow, shovel, or otherwise place snow, ice, and debris onto that portion of any public way open to travel.

“Why are trucks travelling with their plows up?”
During extended storms, vehicles must return to the garage for reloading of material, repairs, or refueling.

Post Storm:

When all roads are clear and the storm subsides another round of /salt is applied to melt any remaining snow and ice.

Spot Treatment:

There are times during light precipitation and freeze/thaw cycles where “spot treatment” is necessary. This is generally initiated by the direction of public safety personnel. If the Police Department and/or the DPW feels spot treatment is needed in an area after hours, the DPW staff will be called in to address the immediate problem. Once that problem is addressed, the crew will then check other areas of Town to see if treatment is needed.

Mailboxes:

Mailboxes installed in the Town right of way are placed at the owner's risk. Each mailbox installation should be consistent with US Postal Service regulations and be sufficiently solid to withstand snow-clearing efforts by the Town. A large highway plow moves many tons of snow while widening roadways. The rolling action of snow off the plow blade has the potential to damage all but the strongest of mailboxes and posts.

The Town is NOT responsible for this damage.

It is the responsibility of the property owner to clear snow around mailboxes to assure mail delivery by the U.S. Postal Service.

What you can do to help....

- Obey winter parking bans and Town Bylaws. No parking on roadways during snow events between the hours of 12:00 am to 6:00 am.
- Please ensure that trash bags and trash/recycling containers are not in or at the edge of the roadway as this interferes with snow removal efforts.
- Please be patient. Plow operators work in extreme conditions for extended periods of time with little rest. Remember, they likely have to clear their own walks and driveways when they finish clearing the roadways.
- Sand is available to senior residents (for home use) "Sand for Seniors" is organized by staff of the Senior Center.
- DO NOT plow, shovel, or blow snow into the paved way at any time. If you contract out plowing of your property, please advise your contractor to refrain from plowing onto or across the roadway. See Town Bylaw, Chapter 205, Section 11 above. You'll be held responsible for their actions.
- Please clear snow from around fire hydrants in front of or near your property. This will greatly reduce the time it takes to access a hydrant in an emergency. Please contact the Lunenburg Water District for questions about hydrants.

Remember:

Driving in winter snowstorms should be avoided whenever possible. During every winter storm, there are times when road conditions are hazardous despite everyone's best effort. Our work to restore safe road conditions is completed more quickly and efficiently when roads are free of traffic and illegally parked vehicles. If you must drive, make sure your vehicle is properly prepared. Be cautious, be courteous, and make sure to allow extra time.

Thank you for your continued cooperation and support. If you have any questions regarding Town Bylaws, parking restrictions or winter operations the following numbers or Town websites may be helpful to you:

DPW	(978) 582-4160
POLICE	(978) 582-4150
BOARD OF SELECTMEN	(978) 582-4144

Town Bylaws:

<https://www.ecode360.com/LU3524>

Lunenburg DPW:

<https://www.lunenburgma.gov/departments/public-works>