

**CITY OF RAPID CITY  
SNOW POLICY**  
(Council Approval: 03/02)

PW103007-21b

**GOAL:**

To provide the motorist with the safest driving surface possible, in an efficient and economical manor, with the resources available.

**SANDING AND CHEMICAL TREATMENT OF STREETS:**

Initial service of streets during a snow/ice incident will be applications of sand, salt, liquid deicer or a combination of these products. Streets will be treated in the following order of priority:

- All arterial and emergency routes along with those streets having steep grades or other hazardous geometry and major intersections
- Collector and sub collector streets, school routes
- Residential streets.

To reduce the amount of material used, flat level streets are not treated unless a special situation should exist. There will be no sand used in the downtown core area (E. Blvd. to W. Blvd. & Rapid St. to Columbus St.) except under special circumstances as may be determined by the director of public works or his designee.

Other accepted chemicals may be used alone or in addition to the sand/salt mix for maximum effectiveness.

**PLOWING POLICY:**

Snow plowing incidents will be divided into three levels of service. The service level will be determined by the director of public works or his designee.

- **LEVEL A RESPONSE:** (approximately 2-4" snow depth)  
This level of service will include the plowing of all arterial streets, emergency routes, streets with hills and other hazardous geometry, collector streets and major intersections. May include downtown snow removal.
- **LEVEL B RESPONSE:** (approximately 4-6" snow depth)  
Sub collector streets and some high traffic residential streets will be plowed in addition to those streets covered in "A Level Service". Also included in this service will be downtown snow removal. Some work may be contracted with the private sector.
- **LEVEL C RESPONSE:** (approximately 6" plus)  
This service will include the plowing of all remaining streets in the city. Contractors will be hired so this service may be completed in the shortest period of time possible.

**GENERAL PLOWING POLICIES:**

Driveway entrances will not be opened by city crews under routine plowing operations. Exceptions can be made to this policy in special situations as may be determined by the director of public works or his designee.

Clearing of the snow from sidewalks located at either curb side or property line, shall be the responsibility of the property owner as per ordinance #12.20.070. The city snow policy will be to remove the snow from sidewalks on the public bridges and from those curb side sidewalks located on streets with four or more traffic lanes, on a predominantly residential street and on a school pedestrian route. This work will be done only after street plowing operations have been completed.

It shall be the practice of the city to plow the street from curb to curb in order to maintain the surface drainage and the structural integrity of the street. Should mail delivery be halted at a residence because a windrow of snow is blocking the mail box, the city will remove enough snow for mail service to resume if plowing was done improperly.

**SNOW REMOVAL POLICY:**

PW103007-21b

As per Chapter 10.48 of the "Rapid City Municipal Code" snow removal operations will be performed in the downtown core area, other posted areas, and those areas deemed necessary by the director of public works or his designee. This work will be performed primarily during the night time hours to minimize traffic interference.

**SEVERE WINTER WEATHER PLAN**

When a "Weather Condition 3" is declared (heavy intense storm of prolonged duration) by the Emergency Management Office the mayor or his designee may declare a Snow Emergency. In this case all available personnel will be called to duty. A plow and operator will be dispatched and housed at each fire station for emergency response. The remaining personnel will be housed at the street department facilities until the storm subsides and plowing operations may commence.

**THERE'S NO BUSINESS LIKE  
SNOW BUSINESS**

As the motoring public begins preparation for the coming winter season, the street department has been doing so since the last season ended. With the end of the previous snow season polices, plans, equipment and materials are reviewed, refined, repaired and replaced in an effort to improve our service for the season ahead.

Snowy, wintry conditions brings it's own set of circumstances and problems, causing frustration inconvenience and hazardous driving conditions for all of us who confront it, motorists, pedestrians, emergency services and snow fighters alike.

Our goal is to provide the motoring public with the safest driving surface possible, with the resources we have available.

Rapid City contains approximately 350 miles of streets (about 1,500 lane miles) and 40 miles of alleys. Naturally when a snow begins, it is impossible to cover the entire street system at once, so a priority system has been established for different levels of service.

**SANDING & CHEMICAL TREATMENT OF STREETS**

When a snow begins, all streets will be serviced in the following manner or until the criteria for a plowing operation is met: The arterial, emergency routes, and those streets having steep grades or other hazardous geometry and major intersections are the first areas addressed. This is followed by treatment of the collector and sub collector streets and school routes then ending with treatment of residential streets. In an effort to reduce the amount of deicing material used, we do not treat flat level sections of roadway unless a special situation should exist. The material used for deicing is a mixture of road salt (sodium chloride) enhanced with a liquid deicer (Magnesium Chloride) which lowers the ambient temperature at which snow and ice can be melted which in turn reduces the overall amount of material needed. When necessary, a mixture of 85% washed river sand and 15% salt may also be used.

**PLOWING AND REMOVAL**

As no two storms are the same, we cannot establish a specific time of day that a plowing operation will start. Many pieces of information are taken in to consideration prior to commencing plowing operations. Items considered are: time of day, time of year, temperature, weather forecast, rate of snow fall, ground temperature, etc. Plowing is a twenty four hour a day operation and snow incidents are categorized into three different levels of response.

- **Level A Response:** ( about 2-4" snow)

Covers all arterial streets, emergency routes, hills and other hazardous geometry and major collector streets as well as school zones. PW103007-21b

This level of service is provided primarily by street department personnel and will take about 24 to 30 hours to complete.\*Also may include downtown snow removal.

- **Level B Response:** (4-6" snow)

This level of service is extended to include sub collector streets and some of the busier residential streets. Again this is accomplished primarily with street department personnel and will take approximately 30 to 48 hours of continuous operation for completion.

- **Level C Response:** (6" plus)

Level C service includes all remaining streets. In this case, a number of contractors are hired to supplement city crews. The contractors are assigned specific areas to do and are asked to operate 24 hours a day until all streets are open for travel. This level of service will cost \$1200 to \$1500 per hour and take 30 to 48 hours to accomplish.

\*Snow Removal in the downtown core area differs from normal plowing in that the snow is loaded and hauled from the area to a disposal site. This effort requires a night time operation and, depending on the amount of snow, normally takes one night to complete.

## **ANSWERS TO FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ON RAPID CITY'S SNOW POLICY**

### **Why do you use so much sand?**

Remember that the sand you see on the streets in the spring is generally the accumulation of numerous snow/sanding incidents throughout the season. However we are using different chemicals and a more discriminate sanding policy in an effort to reduce the impact of sanding material on air quality. In recent years, the amount of sand used has been reduced to almost none in the interest of air quality and motorist safety.

### **You plowed my driveway full of \*@#!o snow!**

To open the gutter and maintain drainage our policy is to clean the street from curb to curb. This requires a number of passes by the plows. Do not open your drive until you are sure the plows are done and then try to pile the snow on the right side of the drive, as you face the street. This will minimize the amount of snow pushed back in your driveway should additional plowing be required.

### **Why doesn't the city open my driveway?**

There is in excess of 15,000 driveways in the city. If it were to only take two minutes per driveway to clear the snow, it would take approximately 500 hours at a cost of nearly \$30,000.

### **Why don't you plow the snow to the middle?**

Placing the snow in the middle of the street reduces the width of the driving lanes, allows water to run across the street and refreeze during thaws, restricts visibility and causes a great deal of inconvenience if you must turn across the center line.

### **I'm not getting my mail!**

During the course of plowing residential streets there are instances that a windrow of snow may block

your mail box. If the postal service refuses to deliver your mail because of this, please call the street department and we will correct the situation if plowing was done incorrectly. PW103007-210

### **You put your \*!@#\$\$%+ snow on my curb side sidewalk.**

Curb side sidewalks are a curse for snow plow operators, who must plow from curb to curb but try to keep the walk open. The operators only recourse is to try to keep the amount of snow on the walk to a minimum. Unfortunately the responsibility of keeping the sidewalks clear falls on the property owner. There are a few select areas where the city does remove snow from curb side walks. These are restricted to sidewalks on four lane streets, located in a residential area and on a school pedestrian route. These sidewalks are cleared only after the street plowing operation has been completed.

### **Why aren't the downtown streets cleared first?**

To remove the snow from the downtown business area, all parking has to be eliminated, consequently a "Snow Alert" is declared and a snow removal operation is initiated. Costs to the taxpayer for downtown snow removal run about \$650 per hour with a total cost of \$15,000 - \$18,000 per incident. Due to the high cost of snow removal we wait for the storm to end before commencing this operation. This gives the downtown businesses time to clear their sidewalks to an area where the snow is collected and hauled out.

### **What is a "Snow Alert"?**

A snow alert is declared by the director of public works or his designee when snow depth reaches approximately 4". All designated streets in the "Snow Alert" area are posted and the alert will be announced through local news media sources. Vehicles parked in these areas will be towed and fined as per ordinance number 10.48.050.

### **Damages from plowing operations.**

When snow covers everything it is impossible for the plow operator to determine the location of curbs and other obstructions. As a result, some damage does occur to sod, curbs, driveways, sprinkler systems and etc. If you should experience this problem, just call the street department and needed repairs will be scheduled when weather permits.

**How can the citizen help?**

PW103007-21b

Snow causes many inconveniences but having your vehicle equipped for winter driving, using winter driving skills and allowing more time for travel will reduce your stress. Park your vehicle off the street if plowing operations are underway and don't throw snow into the street when cleaning your drive or walk. Remember that snow is only a temporary inconvenience.

If you have any further questions about Rapid City's snow removal program you may contact the Rapid City Street Department at **394-4152**.