



SNOW PLOWING Q and A's:

Q: “Why didn’t my street get plowed sooner?”

A: For a large storm (four inches deep or more), Public Works crews begin plowing when roads become covered with snow. Most often, this occurs in the middle of the night. Because each road requires a snow plow approximately 6 passes to push the snow to the curb, it will take the entire public works crew a minimum of 16 hours to complete the over 100 miles of streets in Syracuse. This time increases when the duration of storms continues for longer periods of time. The snow plow fleet typically travel a combined distance of over 600 miles throughout the city to clear all city streets. As growth occurs with additional miles of city streets added to our network, the time to complete snow plowing increases by six times for each mile using the same number of plows and plow drivers.

Q: “Why did my street not get plowed? It got plowed during the last storm.”

A: Each driver has a specific route to follow. The order of priority is based on traffic volume. Thus, the first streets plowed are the main roads such as 1000 West, 2000 West, 2700 South, 700 South, etc. These are spaced at a one-mile grid throughout the city. After those are completed, snow plows move on to the subdivision mains. These are neighborhood collector streets, meaning roads which run all the way through a neighborhood and connect to a main road. These are somewhat spaced at a half-mile grid. Each neighborhood in a one-mile grid has between two and five outlet roads that are completely plowed when snow accumulates to 2 ½ inches or deeper.

When snow accumulates to 4 inches or deeper, then all city streets are plowed with local streets and cul-de-sacs having the lowest priority.

The intent of the priority is to provide the most efficient snow removal in the timeliest manner with the limited equipment that the city has available. The priority roads method provides a way that a vehicle will travel no further than ¼ of a mile before getting to a street that has been plowed within a short amount of time.

Q: “What gets plowed in a smaller storm?”

A: A “small storm” is one that accumulates 1 to 3 inches of loose snow on the road in a single event. Main city roads and the subdivision collector streets will be plowed. Cul-de-sacs will NOT be plowed.

A “mild storm” that accumulates less than an inch of snow, may require salting the roads if the temperatures are in the freezing range. If temperatures are warm enough, no action is needed as slush will just melt.

Q: “Why has my street never been plowed?”

A: All city streets get plowed when snow accumulates to 4 inches or more in a single storm. The following conditions may give the impression that snowplows have not cleared the street:

- **Snow gets packed down on the roads from vehicles prior to snow plowing. In this case, snowplows clear the top layer of loose snow or slush from the surface, but are unable to clear away snowpack and ice down to the bare pavement.**
- **Ice on the road may thaw rapidly leaving slush and loose snow in the roads.**
- **Snow cleared from driveways is illegally cast into the road (SCC 4-5-160).**
- **Vehicles parked on the roads and other obstructions in the road, prevents the plow from adequately clearing the roads. (SCC 11-20-010)**

Q: “Why are there large piles of snow left by my driveway?”

A: Drivers have been trained and instructed in the operating of snow plow vehicles. The only place to put snow from the street is along the sides of the road. It is not the intent of the driver to block you in or to cover your freshly shoveled driveway or sidewalks. In order to clear streets, snow must be pushed to the edge of the road. We encourage neighbors to work together to keep driveway approaches and sidewalks cleared off for the safety of your neighborhood. Also please keep parked cars off the road during and after a snowstorm. (SCC 11-20-010)

Q: “What if I am handicapped or have special needs that require additional attention?”

A: Please let Public Works know if there is a special need to assist disabled individuals. We will review them on a case by case basis and see if there is a way we can help. Call 801-825-7235.

Q. What are the priorities for snow removal

A: Priority 1: Primary traffic streets are usually known as arterial streets and determined to be the high volume which must be kept open to provide the basic transportation needs for hazardous intersections, medical clinics, fire and police stations, schools, and other safety sensitive areas within our city.

Priority 2: Secondary and residential routes are selected minor arterial, secondary intersections, collectors, bus routes, and residential streets deemed desirable to be maintained as time and storm duration permit.

Priority 3: Streets which are deemed low volume streets such as local residential subdivision roadways, and cul-de-sacs. The City will address Priority 3 streets as time and equipment availability permit. Severe weather conditions may delay or impact priority 3 snow removal operations.

Q. What level of service is expected for snow removal on streets?

A: It is not the position of the City of Syracuse to maintain a bare pavement policy or to provide snow and ice removal on every City street during or after every snow storm. In some cases, after traffic movements have occurred on snow covered streets snowplows are not as effective for totally clearing packed snow or icy roadways. Temperatures, storm duration and intensity have a profound effect on the ability of snowplows to clear streets and for salt to melt the snow and ice.

Q. Can I push snow from my driveway into the road?

A: Snow removed from driveways and sidewalks must not be placed in the road. It creates a hazard for vehicles and increases the risk of accidents. City ordinances prohibit this action. (SCC 4-05-160)

Q. Why didn't the city plow or salt my road?

A: There could be several reasons that a particular road is not plowed. Sometimes, vehicles parked on the road prevent plowing. But it may be because the storm was not heavy enough.

In 2008, the City Council adopted a policy governing snow removal, which we still follow:

- Large storms (4-inches or more) - plows attempt to clear every road in the City, including cul-de-sacs. But with over 100 miles of road and a small fleet of plows, it takes 16-20 hours to do so.
- Medium storms (1-3 inches) - only arterial and neighborhood collector roads are cleared.
- Small storms (1-inch or less) – salting of main roads..

Plows also prioritize their routes:

1. Arterial and high-volume streets
2. Minor arterials and neighborhood collectors
3. Local roads and cul-de-sacs

Since the snowplows are designed to remove loose snow, packed snow may remain on the roads.

We provide efficient service to residents at the lowest cost. This efficiency allows us to invest limited road funds into repair and paving projects.

More information can be found at www.syracuseut.com/public-works.