

City of Nisswa Snow Removal Policy

2016

1. Introduction

The City of Nisswa believes that it is in the best interest of the residents for the City to assume basic responsibility for control of snow and ice on city streets. Reasonable ice and snow control is necessary for routine travel and emergency services. The City will provide such control in a safe and cost-effective manner, keeping in mind safety, budget, personnel and environmental concerns. The City will use its employees, equipment and/or private contractors to provide this service. This policy will be regularly updated as new technology or better procedures become available, or as the level of service demand changes.

2. Level of Removal

The City of Nisswa balances the level of snow removal with cost and environmental responsibility. Because of this, the City does not maintain a “Clear Lane” policy that the State maintains on highway 371, and Crow Wing County maintains (to a lesser degree than MN Dot) on their more heavily traveled roads. Clear Lane policies dictate heavy salt use and multiple passes of plow trucks to get back to a dry road as fast as possible. It also relies on large car traffic volumes to help clear the lanes which either blows the snow off the road or wears the snow out with repeated tire passes on the same spot. Usually accompanying a Clear Lane policy is a large, open right of way policy that uses large right of ways, clear of trees, allowing wind to help clear loose snow from a raised road surface and allows the sun to help melt the remaining snow and ice. It is and has been the policy of Nisswa to maintain a tight right of way for roads, with trees close to the edge of the paved surface. These trees canopy the road and keep sunlight and appreciable wind from reaching the paved surface. This policy makes a clear lane policy nearly impossible no matter how much salt, sand, or traffic are applied.

3. Winter Preparedness

The use of Minnesota roads, especially northern Minnesota roads without a Clear Lane policy, like ours in Nisswa, requires awareness and preparedness for the conditions you are likely to encounter. There will be packed snow and ice that can't be removed during the heart of the winter. To most Nisswa residents and visitors being prepared is “just good, common sense”, but there are always people who are new to the area, or who do not have “good, common sense”, with that, please consider the following:

- A) **What type of vehicle you are driving.** You need ground clearance when the snow gets deep. Leave the low ground clearance sports car or the motorcycle in the garage. A front wheel drive car, or a 4x4 will be a better choice.
- B) **Check your tires.** Make sure your tires are not bald and properly inflated. Get snow tires or aggressive all weather tires if you are having trouble with traction.
- C) **SLOW DOWN!!!!** Even if your vehicle is brand new, 4x4, supercharged, and ready for the apocalypse, it is still mechanical. Mechanical things react more slowly, less

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predictably, and do break more easily when it is cold. Most importantly, with less traction due to the snow and ice, you need much more room to stop and or react to an obstacle. Slowing down is the number one thing you can do to avoid having trouble with winter driving in Nisswa. Ask yourself, is leaving 5 minutes early for work or an appointment really that inconvenient?

The “Who, What, Where, When, and How of Nisswa Snow Removal.

Who: The City of Nisswa has 5 employees who work on snow and ice removal when needed. These employees suspend their normal duties with the City (such as sewer operation or building maintenance) to do snow and ice removal. The City of Nisswa does not have dedicated staff for snow removal as MN Dot does. During business hours the Clerk or Deputy Clerk at City Hall handle questions/concerns about snow removal and deliver them to the Public Works Director at the earliest opportunity. Please contact **City Hall at 218-963-4444** with any questions or concerns about snow and ice removal operations and they will be addressed as soon as possible. Please do not stop the plow operator to ask questions as it only slows the operation down. Operators have been instructed to relay your question to the Public Works Director anyway because he is responsible for snow and ice removal operations and decides when those operations will commence and how they are carried out. After hours issues with snow removal can be addressed by calling the **On-Call phone at 218-821-4768 and leaving a message**. Someone from Public Works will call back or take care of the issue as soon as possible. In the event of a **true emergency**, please call **911**.

What:

- 1) The City uses 2, 6 yard dump trucks with plows and wings to plow 2 separate routes. Basically there is a north route north of County 18 that is a plowed by a 1999 GMC, and a south route, south of County 18 plowed by a 2005 Sterling (see attached route maps).
- 2) A John Deere 7230 tractor with a snow wing and snow blower clears the downtown area and city parking lots (Community Center, City Hall, Fire Hall, and Pickle). This machine is also used to blow back large banks in heavy snow events and scrape ice/hard packed snow throughout the city.
- 3) 2 Ford F450 with pickup plows, one with a sander, are chase plows. They follow the 2 large dump trucks and clean small areas where the bigger trucks do not fit well. They are also used to do spot cleaning and sanding between snow and ice events.
- 4) A Bobcat Tool Cat with a snow blower is used to clear the public sidewalks of 2” or more of snow. It is also used to clear the cemetery, hockey rink, and sewer lift stations.
- 5) A John Deere X749 garden tractor with a broom attachment is used for the sidewalks and ice rinks when there are dustings of snow. Each winter begins with 350 cubic yards of mixed, treated, salt sand, in the covered salt sand building.
- 6) Each winter begins with 50 cubic yards of straight, treated salt, in the covered salt sand building.
- 7) Each winter begins with a minimum reserve of 50 cubic yards of treated salt at the depot in Duluth.

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Where:

- 1) Route maps accompany this written S.O.P.
- 2) Plowing routes will be modified if equipment breaks or if not all personnel are available due to illness or vacation schedules.

When:

- 1) **Plowing operations are expensive! They will only be employed when they are able to make a significant improvement to driving conditions.**
- 2) The Public Works Director will decide when and how to start plowing and ice control operations.
- 3) Plowing operations will typically commence when more than 2 inches of snow have accumulated and when snowfall has ceased.
- 4) Plowing will be done when drifting snow is causing travel problems.
- 5) Ice control operations will begin when significant icing of the streets is causing travel problems.
- 6) Snow plowing operations for most events will start at 4:30am. If it snows during the day more than 2 inches and ends prior to 7 pm, plow operations will likely begin that evening.
- 7) Snow plowing operations last 6-8 hours during a typical snowfall. More time will be required for heavy snow.
- 8) Plowing will be prioritized according to traffic conditions, street function, and importance to the welfare of the community.
- 9) In the event of heavy snow, limited operations will be started to keep roads passable for emergency traffic. When plowing becomes ineffective due to very heavy snowfall, or whiteout conditions exist that make it too dangerous to be plowing, plowing will be suspended until conditions improve.
- 10) Snowplow operators will be expected to work until the roads have been cleared. Snowplow operators are limited to 1, 12 hour shift in a 24 hour period and will take a 15 minute break every 2 hours due to safety concerns. During long term, heavy snowfall events (more than 24 hours) the staff will be divided into shifts to provide minimum plowing to all areas until the snow event is over.

How:

- 1) Again Nisswa **DOES NOT** have a “Clear Lane” policy. Roads are cleared of snow and intersections, hills, and curves are treated to melt as much ice as possible.
- 2) The City is concerned about the environment and will use as little salt and other chemicals as possible to allow safe use of the roads at reasonable speeds.
- 3) Roads are plowed from the centerline to the right hand shoulder. No special effort will be made to favor one side of the road or other to prevent leaving a berm on anyone’s driveway or adjacent right of way.

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- 4) Downtown streets are plowed to accumulation piles at the end of the streets. These piles are then hauled away to permanent storage spots or put into piles for the Nisswa Jubilee in February. The accumulation piles will usually be removed the day after the roads have been plowed. These piles are removed to prevent melt water runoff from damaging the pavement in freeze/thaw cycles.
- 5) Follow up plowing will begin the first business day after a major snow storm to widen streets where applicable and to more thoroughly sand intersections, hills, and curves.
- 6) Placing private equipment (such as sprinkler heads, mailboxes, driveway markers, etc.) in the road right of way is at the risk of the property owner. These devices can, and often are, damaged by plowing operations and will **NOT** be replaced by the City.
- 7) Mailboxes placed on a swing away post, **NOT** encumbered by a newspaper post, damaged by plowing operations are eligible for replacement at the discretion of the Public Works Director. Only basic mailboxes from the hardware store will be provided. Lettering and other options placed on the mailbox are the responsibility of the property owner.
- 8) Landscaping damage done by plows in the right of way will **NOT** be repaired by the City.
- 9) The City is **NOT** responsible for salt damage to property or vegetation in the road right of way.
- 10) The City is **NOT** responsible for salt damage in driveways or garages that have salt tracked into them from the street.
- 11) Pushing snow across the street or leaving snow on the street from driveway clearing is **NOT** permitted and may result in an administrative fine.
- 12) Please do not park on downtown City streets during a Snow Emergency, as defined in Chapter IX of the City Code. It is prohibited and subject to tow a way at the owner's expense.
- 13) Please shovel sidewalks downtown according to Chapter IX of the City Code. Shoveling prior to snowplowing is helpful and prevents ice buildup in the parking spots.