

How you Can Help

Here are some ways that you can help to make a winter storm event easier on both yourself and on the Public Works Crew:

- Make sure your vehicle is ready for winter driving conditions (snow or all season tires, good wiper blades, a good battery, added weight in the truck, etc)
- Allow yourself additional driving time to arrive at your destination
- Reduce speed (even 4x4's have difficulty stopping on the ice)
- Watch for black ice, especially on bridges and overpasses. Always take caution when traveling in these areas.
- Do not shovel, blow or plow snow from driveways into or across the road. This practice is prohibited by city ordinance and can cause a serious traffic hazard. If possible, it is best to place snow on the side of the driveway opposite the direction from which the plow is coming. That way, the plow will carry snow away from the driveway rather than back into it.
- Leave adequate distance, at least 200 feet whenever following a piece of snow removal equipment
- Finally, please be patient. The city has approximately 118 centerline miles of roadway and approximately 32 miles of sidewalk to clear. Snow removal is a difficult and time-consuming job; we strive to accomplish this task in a safe and timely manner.

Mailboxes

Owners are encouraged to view our mailbox guidelines posted on our website to ensure proper distance and height. Reflectors are useful and should be mounted to be visible from all approaches. Posts should be checked periodically for deterioration or rot to reduce the possibility of being broken simply by the weight of plowed snow. The city will not replace or reimburse for custom made mailboxes, ornate posts, granite posts, etc., existing mailboxes with rotted posts or in obvious poor existing condition. State of Maine law views mailboxes as an encroachment in the public way put there at the Owner's risk. Municipalities are not legally liable for any damage or repairs to mailboxes due to plowing operations.

The City of Saco Public Works Department is committed to removing the snow and ice from streets and sidewalks as quickly as possible. The safety and mobility of our roadways throughout the winter months is very important to us. We hope that these comments and recommendations will help you and your neighbors understand what it is that we do and why we do it!

Thank you!

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CITY OF SACO

Department of Public Works

WINTER OPERATIONS GUIDE

Snow Plowing

Sanding & Salting

Snow Removal

How you can help

Maine winters are famous for a number of reasons. Snowstorms, frigid temperatures, and changing conditions are all part of the mix. People who live here understand how winter weather can adversely affect their daily routine. Saco Department of Public Works (DPW) Winter Operations Program is designed to deal with various weather conditions, minimize the adverse impact on residents, businesses, and visitors.

We hope you find our guide to be a helpful resource that gives you all the information you need regarding the City's Winter procedures. As always, we look forward to serving you and wish you a safe and happy winter season

Sidewalks

There are approximately 32 miles of sidewalk that need to be cleared and treated. The first priority is the downtown business district and school zones (the requirement is to clear a one mile radius around all schools in the city). Once these have been cleaned up the crews work into other areas. The city has 3 sidewalk tractors; it typically takes 3 to 5 days to completely clear sidewalks. On narrow streets, it may not be possible to clear the walks until snow can be removed from the street, so the walks may be unavailable for a week or more. Please be patient.

Driveways

While plow crews try to minimize the amount of snow that gets plowed into driveways during a storm; it is the responsibility of the property owner to clear their driveway opening.

It would be impossible to lift our plows every time we passed a driveway and would certainly compromise our ability to provide safe traveling routes for the public.

City ordinance prohibits the shoveling or plowing of snow onto or into any City Street, or blocking of sidewalks.

Winter Parking Ban

If a significant storm is predicted a **parking ban** may be ordered and the **Transfer Station** will be closed. The parking ban will prohibit parking on city streets allowing the crews to perform their job quickly and efficiently. Closing the Transfer Station will allow the department to have more personnel available to fight the storm. Bans will be announced on local radio and tv stations. You can also sign up for email notifications on our website or call our parking ban hotline at 282-SNOW (7669)

Sanding & Salting

During normal business hours, DPW staff will monitor the weather and dispatch trucks and equipment as required. For nighttime and weekend storms, the Police Department will monitor road conditions. They will contact DPW foremen, should snow or icing develop. These individuals will respond with the appropriate number of trucks and equipment concentrating on main roads. This would ordinarily involve sand or salt runs to keep snow and ice from forming and packing on the road surface. Plowing operations would begin as needed. Major routes and arterials are the first priority followed by secondary roads and connectors. The objective is to keep roads safe and passable and prevent unmanageable accumulations in long duration storms.

Sand is available to residents at the Public Works Garage. We allow 2 – 5 gallon pails per household (provide your own pails, no contractors allowed)

Snow Plowing

Saco DPW maintains approximately 150 miles of streets and sidewalks. During the winter months, the department has the responsibility for plowing and removing snow as well as controlling and treating icy conditions. The department is also responsible for clearing parking lots and driveways at city schools and other public buildings. No two storms are identical; weather conditions can vary

significantly during the winter months. Different conditions require different tactics and circumstances will dictate the appropriate strategy. The goal is to keep the travel lanes open, minimize accumulation, and maintain passable conditions on the main roads. As the storm diminishes, drivers will go back over all routes to clean up and widen the roadways and intersections. Salt and sand will be applied to treat road surfaces. It may take 3 to 4 hours to complete a typical plow route, significant accumulations may occur during intense storms.

After the Storm

Once the storm has ended, all secondary and minor roads will be cleared. The entire city will receive "another pass" to insure the roads are in a satisfactory condition. Salt and sand will be used to treat icy spots and packed snow. At this point, the focus shifts entirely to sidewalks and snow removal.

Snow is removed for two primary reasons: to clear streets and sidewalks for vehicle and pedestrian traffic and to provide space for future snow accumulation. The downtown area is completed first, once this is complete, the crews move into residential areas. This is a slow process and it will take several weeks to finish the job. It is not unusual to have another storm hit, starting the process again.

General Information

Public Works does not have a dispatcher on duty 24 hours a day. We rely on the Police Dept during winter months to call in our crews outside normal working hours.

Do not be confused by plow trucks riding with their plows up. They may be going in for fuel, repairs, or headed for another area.