

CITY OF ONEIDA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

SNOW AND ICE CONTROL POLICY

Introduction:

The City of Oneida's roads are subject to freezing rain, ice, snow and drifting at any time from November through April. The City's goal is to maintain its approximately 100 centerline miles of roads in as good winter driving conditions as weather, equipment, and budgets allow. We are also responsible for clearing multiple City-owned parking lots. This does not mean that bare, dry pavement should be expected after each snowfall or ice storm. Furthermore, this does not mean that roads will be free of ice and snow. When you are driving during snow removal operations, please be patient and give plow trucks some additional space. You should NEVER pass a plow truck unless directed by the operator. Plow trucks have limited visibility and must often make sudden moves to avoid parked vehicles and other roadside obstacles.

Snow and Ice Control:

Planning and preparing for snow and ice operations is difficult due to the uniqueness of each storm. The inter-relationship of factors such as rate of snow fall, moisture content, accumulation, temperature, time of day, and wind velocity determines the uniqueness of each storm. The City maintains adequate supplies of sand and rock salt.

The City of Oneida DPW currently uses a mixture of 30% abrasive sand and 70% rock salt. In some icing situations, straight salt may be used to speed up the melting process. Sand alone does not have ice melting capabilities. It is primarily used to provide some limited traction. The salt helps prevent the sand from freezing and provides some ice melting capabilities by creating a brine solution that has a lower freezing temperature than the temperature of the surrounding ice. The brine solution is created by a combination of heat from tire friction on the pavement, the sun and moisture in the air and from the accumulated snow on the road. Salt has a practical working temperature range down to about 15-20 degrees Fahrenheit.

During a snow or ice event, DPW road crews will start snow and ice control operations at approximately 2:00 am and continue until the conclusion of the event. Each plow route takes approximately 3 hours to complete under normal conditions; route time could be extended due to the conditions of the event. Some events may necessitate varying hours and will be determined based upon the actual event. The DPW Supervisor has the authority to suspend snow and ice control operations in a severe storm when there is a danger to operators, or it is not practical or cost effective for operations to continue.

Due to limited budgets and personnel, the DPW may not have sufficient equipment to handle severe snow and ice storms as rapidly as usual. Our current staffing consists of 15 full time employees who operate:

- 5 single axle plow trucks

- 1 anti-ice brine truck
- 2 pickup truck plows (dead ends, parking lots, detail work)
- 2 loaders and bobcat (parking lots)
- 1 sidewalk plow and 1 sidewalk blower

No guarantee is made or implied on removal operations. The main objective of snow and ice control is to plow the road surfaces to the shoulder and try to keep the center of road bare surface if possible. During snow events, our priority is to clear the higher trafficked arterials (Main Street, Lenox Avenue, Broad Street, Seneca Street, etc.) along with hospital and school corridors. The City of Oneida DPW endeavors to maintain adequate traction for vehicles properly equipped for winter driving conditions.

After a snow event, the City performs snowbank storage removal near City parking lots to improve sight distance and accommodate parking. Limited sidewalk snow plowing and snow removal at catch basins is also performed.

Equipment:

The City of Oneida has equipment designed for snow and ice operations. The equipment is kept in good condition. The City's equipment is subject to breakdowns and unforeseen incidents. When this happens, plowing route times may be extended. The City takes all steps possible to ensure equipment down time is at a minimum.

In addition, the City of Oneida has shared service agreements with most local municipalities and New York State that could provide equipment and personnel if deemed necessary.

Mailboxes:

The City does not repair/replace or reimburse damaged mailboxes that are an unintended consequence of clearing snow. Property owners may reduce the risk of mailbox damage by ensuring their mailbox is properly installed. The US Postal Service may be consulted for general mailbox guidelines.

Clearing Driveways:

When possible, wait to shovel out your driveway until the snowplow passes through your street. If you cannot wait, shovel the entrance to your driveway last. If you shovel it first and a plow passes by while you shovel the rest, the snow that the plow is pushing will empty into the opening you just created.

In addition, in order to make shoveling your driveway easier, you should pile the snow on the opposite side of the snowplow's approach. On a standard two-way street this would be on the right side of your driveway as you face the street. This way, when the snow passes by, less snow will be pushed back into your driveway.

It is a public hazard and against New York State Vehicle and Traffic Law to shovel snow into the street. If you use a snow blower, point the blower away from the street. The Police Department can cite residents for shoveling or blowing snow into the street. If you hire a contractor to plow your driveway or shovel your walk, you should make certain that they do not plow or shovel snow into the street or sidewalk.

Parking Your Vehicle:

If you have a driveway, please use it to keep the streets as clear of obstacles as possible. When parking your vehicle on the street prior to a forecasted snow event, park as close to the curb or edge of road as possible. If possible, park so that another vehicle is not directly across from you.

Parking is prohibited on City streets between 2:00am and 6:00am between October 15th and April 15th. Limited overnight parking is available in certain posted municipal parking lots – see Section 180-21 of the City ordinance. Parking in the City streets during or following snowfall events hampers the snow removal efforts, restricts traffic flow, and increases the potential for accidents. Please do not park vehicles across the sidewalk. NYS Vehicle and Traffic Law prohibits parking of vehicles on sidewalks. Vehicles that are parked in violation of these parking regulations will be ticketed and may be towed during a snow event.

Sidewalks:

Property owners are responsible for clearing snow and ice from the sidewalks in front of their property. Commercial businesses should always keep sidewalks in front of their businesses free of snow and ice between 9:00am and 5:00pm.

Placing snow on the sidewalk is prohibited and enforced per Section 180-32 of the City ordinance.

The Department of Public Works clears the sidewalks for all City owned properties. DPW also performs snow plowing along main routes to assist property owners during heavy snow events. It is noted that this service is a courtesy performed during normal working hours after roadways have been cleared. The property owner is still responsible for clearing their fronting sidewalk.

Private Driveways:

Driveway maintenance is the property owner's responsibility. Property owners should not place snow over or on the ends of driveway culverts. It is the property owner's responsibility to keep culverts open and clear for the passage of water. Inlets need to be free of blockages in order to accommodate snow melt and drainage. Blocking inlets could cause ice conditions and localized flooding.

The City of Oneida DPW and its employees are not responsible for snow removal from private driveways and yards. New York State prohibits the plowing of snow from driveways across any roadways. Violators may be liable for fines and civil liability due to injury or accidents. If private contractors are used by property owners, they must be made aware of this policy.