

## Door County Highway Department

### Snow and Ice Control Policy

Updated January 2009

#### **PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this policy is to define and outline snow and ice control objectives and procedures as established by the Door County Highway Department. This policy supersedes any and all previously written documents and unwritten policies of the Door County Highway Department regarding snow and ice.

#### **IN GENERAL:**

The intent of establishing the Door County Highway Department's Snow and Ice Control Policy is to provide a uniform understanding of the priorities and procedures used to combat snow and ice related road conditions. Each winter storm has unique characteristics and climatological factors such as storm intensity and duration, wind, temperature, and moisture content, which affects the total amount of snow/ice accumulation and influence the methodology used to combat the resulting snow and/or ice related road conditions.

#### **LEVEL OF SERVICE:**

The Door County Highway Department performs Snow and Ice control on over 2000 lane miles of State, County, and local Town and Village Roads. This includes all of the roads in the county except for the City of Sturgeon Bay, Town of Liberty Grove and Washington Island. The Department also provides snow and ice control for 3 school districts, the Justice Center, several fire departments and town offices, and about 35 private driveways under contracts with the towns. The Highway Department provides snow and ice control service to each of these governmental jurisdictions as part of intergovernmental agreements. Work is performed for each of these jurisdictions based upon their specific guidelines and authorizations. The level of service will vary from State Highway to County Road and even from township to township.

This service is provided using 19 trucks, 8 graders, and wheel loaders. In heavy snow events we may add to this fleet by sending out the old Oshkosh trucks which require two operators.

The policy for snow and ice control is based upon the principal to provide service to the highest priority roadways, or those locations where the most benefit will be received by the most people. Therefore, the typical priority for a snow and ice control event is to provide the highest level of service to State highways, then County roads, and then the local roads. One of the goals of winter maintenance is to achieve "passable roadways" within the limitations imposed by climatological conditions, the availability of resources, and environmental concerns during a winter storm event.

A "passable roadway" is defined as a roadway surface that is free from drifts, snow ridges, and as much ice and snow pack as is practical and can be traveled safely at **reasonable speeds**. A passable roadway should not be confused with a "dry pavement" or "bare pavement", which is essentially free of all ice, snow, and any free moisture from shoulder to shoulder. This "dry/bare pavement" condition may not exist until the weather conditions improve to the point where this pavement condition can be provided.

The definition of "**reasonable speed**" is considered a speed that a vehicle can travel without losing traction. During and immediately after a winter storm event, a reasonable speed will most likely be lower than the posted speed limit. Motorists can expect some inconvenience and will be expected to modify their driving practices to suit road conditions.

## **DISPATCHING PROCEDURES:**

Crews are called out at the outset of a storm and a policy is established on what products are applied based upon environmental conditions. The WisDOT has established priorities to make roadways passable and which roads receive higher priorities. The service to State Highways is based upon their Category Level, for example the four lane STH 57 roadway in the southern part of the County has a higher priority than the 2 lane STH 57 in the northern end of the County. The County Highway winter maintenance system follows a similar practice, except crews are not typically called out until an accumulation of 1-2 inches of snow has fallen. Supervisors direct crews on what type of products to apply based upon weather conditions. Town and village roadways are serviced after the state and county roads. There are some town roads that receive a higher level of service based upon the town directives. Town roads are typically not serviced unless the snow accumulation is in excess of 2 inches. The plow operations will generally consist of three phases: a) making roads passable, b) widening and salting or sanding, and c) general clean up.

The School Districts are typically serviced prior to 6 AM, because those lots need to be cleared prior to all of the students and faculty showing up for the school day. It is also important to service them early based upon the policy of providing the most benefit to the most people.

The County, to the best of its ability will try to maintain the roadways during the course of snow intervals. Operations will be halted when it is deemed too hazardous for our operators and the public or if reasonable accomplishments are not being met. If snowfall stops during the night or early morning hours, plows will be dispatched between 2:00 A.M. and 4:00 A.M. Weekend plowing will be handled in the same manner.

## **SERVICE TO PRIVATE DRIVEWAYS:**

There are essentially four situations in which the Highway Department will perform service in private driveways. The first situation is those whom have executed a contract with the town chairman and the department and will be plowed as part of our routine service for each storm. Second, those whom have executed a contract with the town chairman and the department and want to only be sanded upon request. Third, the Highway Department will attend to any emergency that requires immediate ingress or egress to a property. Fourth, after a snow event, if a property owner needs assistance to open their driveway because of snow accumulation, we will perform the work at the authorization of the Town Chairman or his designee. In all situations, the Highway Department bills the towns for the work completed. The bill includes a drop charge for each time plowed in addition to the labor, equipment and material costs. The town is responsible for collection from the property owner.

## **EMERGENCY SITUATIONS:**

Provisions must be made for situations involving emergencies; therefore, in the event the Door County Highway Department receives notification of an emergency situation, equipment necessary to handle the emergency will be dispatched immediately to assist until the emergency has been resolved. In order to eliminate false emergency calls to the Door County Highway Department, it is preferable that the emergency calls be routed through the Door County Sheriff's Department. Since emergency calls will not always come through the Door County Sheriff's Department, those individuals in the Door County Highway Department receiving emergency calls will inform the caller that the Door County Highway Department will attempt to contact the Door County Sheriff's Department.

## **DEPARTURE FROM POLICY:**

The Door County Highway Department recognizes that conditions may be so unusual or unexpected that a departure from these general policies should be authorized. Therefore, the Door County Highway Commissioner may order a departure from these general rules when, in his opinion, conditions warrant such an action.

## **EQUIPMENT AND OPERATOR:**

Equipment operators are expected to be knowledgeable about the routes they are plowing. They are to be familiar with existing conditions that would affect the speed or rate at which they plow and should use every precaution in avoiding plowing practices that would cause damage to private or public property.

Equipment operators are expected to inspect all equipment related to plowing procedures prior to leaving the Door County Highway Shops.

It is the operator's responsibility to determine there is sufficient fuel in the vehicle prior to beginning plowing. Any malfunction of the equipment, before or during operations, must be reported to the Door County Highway Department immediately.

Individuals operating equipment or vehicles are expected to obey all traffic regulations during snow and/or ice removal operations. Individuals operating vehicles or equipment who are involved in an accident are required to report the accident to their supervisor immediately and must complete and submit an accident report as soon as possible.

## **PUBLIC SAFETY AND COOPERATION**

The goal of the Department is to have all State, County, and local roads passable as soon as reasonably possible, within the limitations of resources, roadway and facilities protection and environmental concerns. The traveling public is reminded to exercise caution and drive with care. In winter weather, the driving hazard that's even worse than snow and ice is your inability to see what's ahead, especially around snowplows. Best Advice: be careful- go slow. Use courtesy and common sense. The legal speed limit may not be possible depending on conditions. The public is also requested Not to Crowd the Plow. Pass plows with extreme caution and never drive into a snow plow's cloud. Remember, in bad weather, if you're out there, so is your County Highway Department.

Mailboxes should be installed in accordance with county policies with respect to set backs and recommended materials. The Highway Department assumes no responsibility for mailboxes damaged during the normal course of operations if they are not installed according to the setback policy or have been damaged by snow from the plow blades.

The Highway Department may assist stranded motorists by contacting law enforcement or emergency personnel. The Department will not attempt to remove stuck vehicles unless directed by law enforcement personnel to eliminate a safety hazard.

**Do not plow or blow snow from driveways onto or across County Highways. It is against the law. The removal of windrows across private drives, deposited from plowing operations, is the responsibility of the resident. Citizens must remove parked vehicles from County Roads to assist in snow removal.**