



ROCK COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

Highways - Parks

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WINTER MAINTENANCE POLICY

Adopted by
Public Works Committee
Of the
Rock County Board of Supervisors

Thursday, January 18, 2018

Winter Maintenance Policy

General

The Rock County Highway Department is responsible for winter maintenance activities and snow/ice control of approximately 36 miles of Interstate, 219 miles of State Highway, 212 miles of County Trunk Highway, and 590 miles of local roads throughout 12 towns. Because of the potential hazard to the public, the need for accessibility and the high incidence of overtime, careful planning and preparation must be done prior to the winter season.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to define the level of expectation for winter maintenance of all roads maintained by Rock County during a winter storm event. The primary goal is to achieve passable roadways within the limitations imposed by climatological conditions, the availability of resources, and environmental concerns during a winter storm event.

Definitions

Passable Roadways: 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 "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.

Reasonable Speed: 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.

24/7 Coverage: Rock County has a presence on the highway for 24 hours per day during a winter storm event unless passable roadway conditions have been achieved. This would only happen during winter storm events of long duration and when conditions warrant.

Winter Maintenance Procedures:

The following section outlines the snow removal procedures used by the Rock County Highway Department. Exceptions to this policy may occasionally be necessary as dictated by weather and road conditions.

Decision to Begin Winter Maintenance

The Highway Department analyzes many factors to determine when to initiate winter maintenance on its respective roadways. These factors include, but are not limited to:

- Current Roadway Conditions
- Current Weather Conditions
- Forecasted Weather Conditions
- Time of Day

Winter Maintenance Methods

The primary method of snow removal shall be by plowing. Salt, salt with additives, salt/sand mixture or sand may be used to enhance snow/ice removal or to improve traction. It should be expected that snow will be plowed into cross streets and driveways as a normal part of snow removal operations.

Level of Service & Hours of Operation

The level of winter maintenance depends on the type of roadway being serviced. There are two classes of roadways used for level of service guidelines. These guidelines are shown below:

- Class 1:** Defined as Interstate Highways and other major state routes. These roadways are determined by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, are subject to specific service requirements, and are serviced 24/7.
- Class 2:** Defined as State Highways, County Highways and Local Roads. These roadways are serviced from 4:00am until 8:00pm every day, including holidays.

Emergency service will be provided upon request from the Rock County Sheriff's Department. The Highway Department maintains communication with, and will respond to specific requests from, the Rock County Sheriff's Department.

Damage to Property

- Rock County shall make reasonable attempts in its snow removal methods to avoid or minimize damage to mailboxes, fences or other appurtenance located in or immediately adjacent to the roadway. Rock County will not repair any damage to these items if the damage is due to the force of the snow being discharged by the snow equipment. Rock County may repair/replace personal property damaged by direct contact by its equipment on a case by case basis. Special installations or decorative designs will be replaced with standard, conventional boxes or materials.
- Rock County will not be responsible for damage to turf in lawns or for the deposition of gravel in road ditches, unless there are extenuating circumstances. During the course of the season, a certain amount of damage to Rock County property or private property may occur. These areas may be repaired at Rock County's discretion, on a case by case basis.

Any damage sustained due to salt brine or other de-icing chemicals placed on the roadway will not be treated or repaired by Rock County.

Snow Emergency

- At any time when visibility declines to a point that it is hazardous to the driving public or snowplow operators to be on the roads, snowplowing or ice control operations may be suspended. Suspended operations shall be resumed when visibility improves. Should it become necessary to close a road for any reason, the Rock County Director of Public Works (Highway Commissioner) or designee shall notify the Rock County Sheriff's Department and the Wisconsin Department of Transportation of said closing. An attempt will also be made to notify the media and the chief elected official of a local road of said closing(s).

Laws and Authority

- The Rock County Highway Department would like to remind everyone that it is unlawful to plow or push snow onto or across a public highway. Section 346.94(5), Wisconsin State Statutes prohibits this action.
- All County Trunk Highways in Rock County are considered "Snow Routes." If abandoned vehicles are encountered, the Rock County Sheriff's Department will be contacted and requested to have the vehicle removed at the owner's expense. If a vehicle is blocking one or more lanes halting snow and ice control operations, it will be moved by whatever means are necessary to reopen the roadway. Any damage incurred in such a move shall be the owner's responsibility.
- Under no circumstances will Rock County use one of its pieces of equipment to push, pull or tow a stranded, private vehicle from a roadway or ditch. In a life or health threatening situation, a Rock County employee may give brief assistance or call for emergency response. Likewise, no Rock County employee may use a Rock County vehicle or piece of equipment to perform any snow or ice control operations on private or commercial property nor be allowed to use personal equipment for similar purposes during working hours.

No Duty or Right Created

The purpose of this policy is to establish goals for the County Highway Division employees regarding snow and ice control. It is not to be construed to create any duty to any individual or entity of the County of Rock. This policy does not provide any special protection or service to any particular individual or group. This policy may be effected in total or in part, as a result of acts of God, equipment breakdowns, weather conditions, inadequacy of equipment, state or federal regulations, shortages of personnel, and any other unforeseen, uncontrolled or unanticipated acts.