

SNOW AND ICE REMOVAL POLICY

POLICY STATEMENT: It is the policy of the Minnehaha County Highway Department to remove snow from the County roads safely and quickly, and to provide reasonable ice control, while taking into consideration the availability of labor, equipment, and funding.

Minnehaha County acknowledges that the policies set forth herein are general and that conditions are different in every snow event. Therefore, a departure from this policy may be necessary to protect the safety, health and welfare of the travelling public. **This policy does not, nor is it intended to encompass, all details of Minnehaha County's snow and ice removal operations. The policy is to be utilized by employees using their judgment and discretion on how to best carry out its provisions. Employees shall obey applicable traffic laws and regulations while carrying out the policy unless violation is necessary in the employee's judgment and discretion and he/she seeks to minimize any safety risks.**

OPERATION HOURS: Normal winter working hours and office hours are Monday thru Friday from 7:30 am to 4:00 pm. Work outside of these hours, such as early morning, evening, and weekends, will be at the discretion of County Highway Superintendent or his designee. Typically during and after a storm, snow removal and sanding operations will be conducted between the hours of 5:00 am and dusk. Exceptions for potential emergencies may be made as determined appropriate by the Highway Superintendent. If you have a medical emergency, contact 9-1-1 immediately.

OPERATIONS IN ADVERSE CONDITIONS: Equipment will not be dispatched when, in the judgment of the Highway Superintendent, low visibility or other conditions are such that the risk to operators and other motorists outweighs the benefits. The general guideline is that equipment will not be dispatched when the estimated visibility in open areas is less than 500 feet. In the event of police, fire or medical emergency, vehicles may be dispatched at the direction of the Highway Superintendent.

ROUTE PRIORITIES: The priority of which roads are plowed and in what sequence may vary, and are weather dependent, but typically go by the following guidelines.

1. Major Collector Routes: These are County major collector routes and are primarily commuter routes.
2. Minor Collector Routes: These roads consist of the remaining paved County roads and gravel County roads.
3. Other County Government Buildings¹: These are parking lots owned by the County (i.e. courthouse, administration building, etc.)
4. Local Roads²: These roads are typically township roads, but can be roads for other public entities such as municipalities.

¹Snow removal at the courthouse and administration building parking lots is typically contracted with private contractors and administered by the Facilities Department Head. The Highway Department will typically send a salt/sander pickup truck to place salt/sand mixtures throughout the parking lots as long as staff is available.

²In the event of an emergency or an extremely high accumulation of snow, other political entities may request the assistance of Minnehaha County. Snow removal work may be performed for other political entities as equipment and labor availability permits, and shall be at the discretion of the Highway

Superintendent. Generally that would mean that local entity operators would have to complete the first pass in both directions of assigned routes and County roads should also be clear of any ground drifting that may make the roads impassable before performing any non-County work.

LEVELS OF SERVICE: Minnehaha County does not have a bare pavement policy and roads may not be free of snow or ice. The following are general snow and ice removal considerations:

1. Anti-icing, snow removal, and ice removal may be limited to daylight hours.
2. Depending upon current and forecasted weather conditions, snow and ice will be removed as best as practical.
3. Special consideration may be given to critical intersections, hills, curves and other hazardous areas.

RURAL MAILBOXES: Minnehaha County will repair or replace mailboxes destroyed by County forces during snow fighting operations. The repair or replacement to mailboxes will be performed by Minnehaha County Highway Department personnel. Existing mailboxes or posts will be reused if undamaged, however, if the existing mailbox or post is significantly damaged, a new mailbox or post will be installed. If a mailbox or post is replaced, the box will be a standard metal box and the post will be a standard breakaway post, meeting Federal Highway Standards. If a mailbox post cannot be replaced do to frozen ground, a temporary mailbox will be used until Spring.

OBSTRUCTIONS: Obstructions within the road right-of-way such as hay bales, vehicles, or fences which might cause drifting are hereby prohibited pursuant to SDCL 31-32-3.1 and duly enacted ordinances of Minnehaha County and shall be removed by the owners

1. Hay bales need to be removed from the road right-of-way before November 1st, and after that time the County may remove the bales at the adjacent landowners expense.
2. The County shall not be liable for damage to stalled or stranded vehicles on the traveled portion of the roadway or other obstructions which will interfere with snow and ice removal and abrasive placement. The owners of stalled or stranded vehicles should immediately notify 9-1-1. A stalled or stranded vehicle blocking the road needs to moved as soon as possible, or the vehicle may be towed at the owner's expense.
3. Vehicles shall also not be parked on the roadway surface or shoulder, and if a vehicle is parked on a personal driveway, it should be outside of the right-of-way.

PRIVATE ROADS: The County will not operate snow removal equipment on private roads. Normal County removal operations may result in snow or ice being deposited in driveways adjacent to public roads. The County will try to limit the amount of snow placed in private drives but when the snow on the roadway is heavy, the amount of snow left in a driveway may be heavy.

An exception to this policy will only occur under the direction from law enforcement or medical response teams to clear private roads or driveways.

SNOW PLACED ON ROADWAY: County residents are to avoid adding to the hazards of wintertime driving by not placing snow from their driveway onto public roads and right-of-way. South Dakota Codified Law 31-32-3.1 prohibits obstructing or causing to be obstructed any public highway or right-of-way and violation is a class 1 misdemeanor. Piles of snow left on or near the road can freeze into a solid mass creating a hazardous situation for vehicles and snowplows. Accidents and damages caused by snow piles placed in the roadway may result in liability to the property owner. Piles of snow increase the chances of drifting snow onto the roadway. Property owners found in violation will be given notice and shall remove the snow. If the snow is not removed within 48 hours after notification, the County will remove the snow and the property owner will be billed.

Adopted by the Commission on December 17, 2013.