

## Winter Snow Removal Operations

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### **A Residents Guide To Winter Snow Removal Operations & Procedures**

The Town of Brookfield Highway Department is pleased to issue "A Resident's Guide to Winter Snow Removal Operations and Procedures". The intent is to advise Brookfield residents of the Highway Department's winter plowing and sanding procedures and to obtain your assistance so that the town roads can be restored to normal conditions as promptly as possible after a winter storm. Your cooperation is essential if the Department is to achieve this objective. We at the Highway Department thank you for your assistance and patience.

The Highway Department is devoted to providing the residents with dependable snow removal in the shortest time possible. Your cooperation will benefit all of us during a snowstorm. If you have any questions concerning the Town's snow removal practices, please call (508) 867-8357. We will try to assist you in any way possible.

### **SNOW PLOWING OPERATIONS**

The following is a general description of Brookfield's snow removal procedure. As you are aware each storm is different, but we try to follow our snow removal procedure as closely as possible

#### **1. Beginning of the Storm**

When a snowstorm begins, the Department responds by applying a sand and salt mix to all town roads. Treating these roadways serves two purposes: it prevents the snow from bonding and compacting to the pavement and it keeps traffic moving. Three sanding trucks equipped with sanders are used for this operation.

#### **2. During the Storm**

Plowing operations begin when approximately three (3) inches of snow accumulate on the ground. 8 Highway vehicles and 6 Emergency Operators are called in to assist with snow removal operations. Each vehicle is assigned to a pre-determined route and will remain in this pattern (repeating the route) until the storm subsides. These routes have been designed such that each piece of equipment completes one circuit of the route in 2.5- 3.5 hours barring equipment breakdown, or unanticipated emergency elsewhere in Town. The main objective "during" the storm is to keep roadways passable. At the end of the storm, the plows begin to widen out all roads by pushing back the amassed snow beyond the edge of the road. Residents may want to wait until the roads have been widened out before clearing the entrance of their driveways.

Please be advised that the snow must not be shoveled or plowed back into the street from the resident's driveway. This creates a hazard to traffic and requires our staff to return to clear it from the street. Town By-Laws Chapter X section 12 prohibits the plowing or

blowing of snow across any public way, street or roadway with applicable fines for this offense.

Another area of concern is mailboxes. We do not deliberately knock over or damage mailboxes. The primary cause of mailboxes being knocked down is heavy snow that is thrown by the moving plow. On rare occasions, a mailbox is struck by a plow due to reduced visibility during a snowstorm and/or snow banks. Remember, any installation within the right-of-way (including a mailbox) is placed there at the owner's risk. Hence, residents are encouraged to place mailboxes at the maximum allowable distance from the pavement. Mailboxes should also be inspected regularly to ensure that they are secure and that posts are not rotted. In April 2007 the Highway Department formally adopted this long standing mailbox policy. Mailboxes damaged by direct contact with a piece of Highway Equipment will be repaired or replaced in the spring by the Highway Department at the discretion of the Highway Superintendent. Residents may appeal the Superintendent's decision to the board of Selectmen within 14 days.

### **3. Following the Storm**

Once the snowfall has stopped and all roads are cleared of snow, post-storm sanding commences. All town roads are again treated with the sand/salt mix to improve traction and melt the remaining snow and ice. Hauling of snow from the village area to the snow farm on Mill St. will commence as soon as feasibly possible. This snow removal is done to increase visibility, widen streets and increase parking spaces. Frequently these operations are done early in the morning to avoid working around parked cars and traffic.

### **WINTER PARKING BAN**

Annually, on November 15<sup>th</sup>, the Town's winter parking ban goes into effect and continues through April 1st. The ban is in effect from 11 p.m. to 6 a.m. The parking ban will allow the Highway Department crews to plow and open roads in a more efficient and timely manner.

Illegally parked vehicles are the biggest obstacles to effectively removing snow from the roadway. Vehicles that violate the winter parking ban may be ticketed by the police and receive a \$15.00 fine. Vehicles that directly hamper snow removal efforts will be ticketed and towed at the owner's expense.

Your cooperation with the parking ban will be greatly appreciated.

### **STATE NUMBERED ROUTES**

The major highway in Brookfield (Route 9) is under the jurisdiction of Massachusetts Highway Department. The State Highway Department and not the Town of Brookfield Highway Department therefore performs all snow removal for this road. Any questions or concerns regarding Route 9 should be directed to the District 3 Office of the Mass Highway at (508) 499-5511. Route 148 is under the jurisdiction of the Town of

Brookfield and therefore the Brookfield Highway Department is responsible for all snow removal on this road.

## **AVAILABILITY OF SAND**

Residents can pick up free sand at the Highway Garage (two 5-gallon pails maximum)

### **Sidewalks**

The sidewalks in Brookfield are plowed by the Highway Department following a storm, once the roads are cleared. Due to our small department size and the age of our sidewalk equipment this may take several days. Plowing sidewalks may push snow back in to your driveway. We apologize for the inconvenience that this causes.

## **RESIDENTS CAN HELP**

Residents can assist the Highway Department during a snowstorm by heeding these suggestions.

- Observe all parking bans
- Reduce your speed and drive cautiously
- Remain off the road during snowstorms unless absolutely necessary.
- Do not allow children to make snow forts at the edge of the road.
- Do not plow, blow or throw snow back into the roadway.
- Avoid placing portable basketball hoops, trash and recycling containers along the roadway. These items will impede snow removal and may be damaged.
- Before final cleanup of your driveway, check the road. If it does not appear to be widened out, a plow will probably return to plow again, and may push snow back into the entrance of your driveway. Waiting until your road has been plowed (first part of Step 2 above) and widened (second part of Step 2 above) might keep you from clearing your driveway more than once.
- If possible, deposit snow from clearing your driveway to the "downstream" side such that the plow carries it away from your driveway. This will minimize the redeposit of cleared snow back into your driveway entrance when the Town's plow does push back the road edges.
- Finally, please have patience. Snow plowing is a time consuming and laborious job covering approximately 40 miles of roadway. With the amount of equipment that the Town schedules to work, most roads get plowed simultaneously so the wait to have your road opened is minimized.
- "Although not part of the highway department's duties, we want to take this opportunity to address the subject of fire hydrants. The fire department will make every attempt to clear snow from hydrants, but we ask, and encourage, residents that live near hydrants to please take some time to clear snow away from hydrants to ensure that the hydrant is both visible and has a useable work space around it."

Revised: 9-27-2011 by Selectmen: Peter S. O'Connell; Rudy Heller; Stephen J. Comtois II