

# **TOWN OF MAMMOTH LAKES**

## **PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT**

### **SNOW MANAGEMENT POLICY**

#### **Goal**

The goal of the Town of Mammoth Lakes Snow Management Policy is to provide the safest possible movement of vehicle and pedestrian traffic throughout the community during winter months and intense storm periods.

The Snow Management Policy is intended to provide Town staff with guidance and to ensure that:

- Public safety is always the highest priority
- The majority of Town is treated equitably
- There are clear and defined public expectations; and
- Appropriate responsibility and authority is established

#### **Equipment, Staffing, and Contracts**

Snow management in the Town of Mammoth Lakes is a function of timing, manpower and equipment. The Town Road Department has thirteen (13) full-time operators and one (1) temporary operator during the winter. The Parks Department, which is responsible for sidewalks and MUP's has four (4) full-time operators. We also have five (5) full-time mechanics that when available are used as snow removal operators. The Town's snow removal fleet includes six (6) loaders with blades, four (4) trucks with plows and cinder spreaders, and five (5) loader mounted snowblowers, six (6) trackless snowblowers for sidewalks, and one (1) skid steer snow blower. The manpower and equipment are divided into two 12-hour shifts during storm periods. The night shift starts at midnight and goes continuously until noon. The day shift begins at noon and continues until midnight.

The Town currently contracts snow removal for all assessment and benefit assessment districts, including roads and numerous parking lots. Contracting snow removal services allows Town staffing to primarily focus efforts on roads and sidewalks while maintaining a higher level of service for Town managed facilities. The following contracts are in place for the winter season.

- Frontage Road Trucking
- Community Recreation Center (CRC)
- Pickleball Complex and Library Parking
- Edison Theater
- Sherwin Creek Road
- Hillside Parking Lot
- Tavern Road Park n' Ride Parking Lot
- Police Station Parking Lot
- Sawmill Cutoff Road and Shady Rest Park
- Juniper Ridge Assessment District
- Bluffs Subdivision Assessment District
- Shoveling of Town facilities, entrances and roofs, propane tanks, emergency generators, pedestrian ramps, bus shelters and other on-call services as needed

#### **Priorities**

To achieve the Town's goal of safe snow removal operations and first responder access, priorities are established as conditions change.

Road Clearing Priorities:

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1. Support for emergency services
2. Main arterials and collector streets, schools and hospital areas, bus routes
3. Residential streets
4. Cul-de-sacs
5. Scenic loop, Sherwin Creek Road
6. Roadside parking areas

Sidewalk and Multi-Use Path (MUP) Priorities:

1. Safe Routes to School sidewalks (Sidewalks and MUPS adjacent to or leading to schools)
2. All other sidewalks
3. Recreational MUPs and Promenades
4. Upper Canyon Blvd sidewalks

## **Operations**

Snow removal operators manage approximately 120 lane miles of roads. During normal storms it takes Town snow removal crews approximately 12 hours to plow every street in Town once. In addition, it can take approximately 20 hours to reach every street with a snowblower. After storms, clean-up is regularly necessary and generally takes between 24 and 48 hours to complete, often longer for larger storms.

Street snow removal operations commence once snow starts to accumulate on the roadways. This can occur at any hour of the day or night. Operations generally follow the same pattern regardless of when the operations begin. The timing of when snow removal occurs, the rate and density of snowfall, and the conditions of roads will ultimately influence when operators arrive in certain neighborhoods.

Public roads and parking areas plowed by contract snow removal operators will be cleared with the same level of priority and level of service provided to the rest of the Community. Where snow removal operations are funded by assessment districts a higher level of service may be provided through contracts with private operators in accordance with obligations to the district.

Parking lots cleared by contract snow removal operators will be cleared overnight and throughout the day as needed. Most parking areas are signed 'No Parking Overnight' (7pm to 7am, 2am to 6am, or similar) to create an opportunity for operators to thoroughly clear and truck snow from parking areas without vehicle obstructions.

Roadside parking areas such as the Frontage Road are the lowest priority. Snow from streets, bus shelters, and sidewalks will be stored in parking spaces until it is safe to truck this snow to an offsite location. This work will be completed under contract to private operators to allow Town operations to focus on streets and sidewalks.

Sidewalk, MUP and bus shelter snow removal occurs in coordination with roadway snow removal operations. Pedestrian mobility is an important aspect of our community and snow removal operations are designed to complement and support other operations. Staff assigned to these operations are dedicated to these routes and are only reassigned from these duties in the most severe situations.

Baseline expectations are as follows:

**Typical Operations:** Most snow events fall into this category. During normal, manageable storms, all roads are considered a priority with timing preference only given to main arterials and bus routes. When a crew goes into an area, all streets will be plowed before leaving that area. Arterials, collectors and bus routes will be plowed prior to 7:00 am and maintained in a safe condition during the day. Blowers are generally 2-3 hours behind plows and will blow all streets to the orange snow stake line before leaving an area. Roads will be cleared allowing vehicles to travel in both directions. Snow will intentionally be stored in public rights-of-way. Snow may be temporarily stored in public parking areas until it can be trucked offsite. During typical operations it will take crews approximately 12 hours to reach every street once. This timing will vary significantly based on the amount and density of the snow. The public should expect under normal circumstances there to be ice and snow on the roadway or sidewalk at any point during or within days of a storm. Icy conditions may not be resolved with Town equipment and may remain until the weather warms or the sun melts the persistent ice.

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The public should be prepared for there to be an equivalent of approximately 12 hours worth of snow accumulation on any road in Town. The Public Works Maintenance Manager may close roads and determine detours whenever it is deemed necessary for public safety.

**Reduced or Significantly Delayed Operations:** When snowfall exceeds the ability of Town crews to successfully perform typical operations throughout the Town, the Public Works Maintenance Manager may implement reduced operations. These circumstances arrive less often and are generally accompanied by public messaging regarding severe events or back-to-back storms. Reduced operations may be necessary when snowfall rates or equipment issues result in unexpected conditions along roadways and MUPs. During reduced operations, lower priorities may be intentionally delayed or suspended until such time as typical operations are again possible. These deviations from typical operations will allow crews to address areas of concern or other emergencies. The public can expect narrower streets, reduced pedestrian access, closed streets, higher than normal accumulations on the streets and delayed plowing and blowing. Personnel from other Town departments may be assigned to storm related duties. The Public Works Maintenance Manager may close roads and determine detours whenever it is deemed necessary for public safety. Additionally, snow removal standards may be lowered to allow for one lane of traffic only with turnouts for passing and using sidewalks for snow storage. This reduction in standards may also apply during normal operations when there is an inadequate snow storage area within the Town rights-of-way to blow snow without the possibility of damaging private property.

**Emergency Operations:** When snowfall exceeds the ability of Town crews to successfully perform reduced operations throughout the Town, emergency operations may be implemented. These operations would occur under a declared emergency by the Town Manager. The Public Works Maintenance Manager, with the concurrence of the Public Works Director and Town Manager, would implement emergency operations to ensure the effective mobility and deployment of emergency services throughout Town. During emergency operations, most priority levels are suspended, and emergency snow removal contracts may be implemented. The Town Manager, if a state of emergency is declared, may conscript whatever manpower and/or equipment needed for the purpose of providing adequate public safety. The Town will communicate special operations through social media, public service announcements (PSA), and on its website. During emergencies the public should expect significant constraints on pedestrian and vehicle movement.

### **Specific Procedures**

1. Main Street / SR203 is cleared by the State of California Department of Transportation (Caltrans). The State uses its own equipment and sets its own standards and practices for clearing roads. The Town and Caltrans have established some protocols and work together when possible to remove snow from the roadway. Additionally, the Town has agreements with the State that permit the Town to clear snow from the sidewalks and sweep cinders.
2. Snow management on State Route 203 frontage roads will be performed between the hours of 2:00am and 6:00am due to parking regulations. Snow from 203, sidewalks and parking spaces will be temporarily stored in parking areas until such time as weather allows the trucking of snow to a snow storage facility. The trucking operation is performed by a contractor.
3. Lake Mary Road, from the Juniper Ridge development to Twin Lakes Bridge, is under United States Forest Service (USFS) jurisdiction and snow removal operations are collaboratively managed as per the agreement between the Town, MMSA and the USFS. It is the Town's intent to keep the roadway open subject to weather conditions and the needs of the partner agencies. The road is regularly closed during and after storms for avalanche mitigation.
4. The Mammoth Scenic Loop Road will be included in snow removal operations during daylight hours only. As conditions on Town roads deteriorate or proactively in advance of storm events, Town representatives may close the Scenic Loop Road until such time as all other Town roads have been cleared of snow.
5. Sherwin Creek Road is owned by the USFS, and under permit to the Town. The Town is permitted to maintain and clear snow from the road. Snow removal operations are under contract to a third party. As snow and wind conditions deteriorate, the Town may elect to close the road, that includes access to the Sherwin Trailhead. The Town will provide as much notice to the public as possible regarding any planned closures. Prior to closing the gate, the Mammoth Lakes Police Department (MLPD) will "sweep" the area

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to ensure nobody is trapped behind the gate. AmeriGas has a large propane tank farm adjacent to Sherwin Creek Road and may elect to have snow cleared from Sherwin Creek Road at their expense to facilitate operations.

6. Roads in the Sierra Valley Sites are included in normal plowing operations. However, plowing may be delayed due to residential congestion. To accommodate residents, this area may receive alternative services when daylight is sufficient for operations. When available the Town will allocate resources to clear the neighborhood before traffic constrains operations.
7. Davison Road may be temporarily closed to downhill traffic when icy and snowy conditions exist. The road will be closed to traffic using snow berms near Canyon Lodge and signage near Lake Mary Road. When the top of the hill is closed, temporary signage shall be placed at the bottom of Davison Road advising non-local traffic that the road is not a “through street” and that the road is closed ahead.
8. Cinders may be used at intersections and steeper Town roads to assist in traction of vehicles, especially following snow removal operations.
9. All contractors employed by the Town to remove snow for assessment districts shall comply with the goals and objectives contained in this policy.

#### **Municipal Code Sections:**

1. Section [10.16.150](#) establishes parking regulations during winter months. Parking control is managed by the Mammoth Lakes Police Department (MLPD).
2. Section [12.04.030\(b\)](#) states that it is unlawful to push snow, haul snow, place snow in any Town right-of-way or snow storage easement or leave snow in a position where it will fall into the Town right-of-way or snow storage easement, without written authorization from the Town.
3. Section [12.28.050](#) requires identification of private snow removal equipment.
4. Section [12.28](#) governs snow removal on public and private property.

#### **Miscellaneous:**

1. The Public Works Maintenance Division has established snow management guidelines for all Town operators. If necessary, the Public Works Maintenance Manager is authorized to amend the guidelines as stated in this policy and shall inform the Public Works Director and Town Manager when deviations or changes occur. Nothing in this policy is intended to interfere with the Manager's duty to make decisions necessary to implement the goals and objectives of Town of Mammoth Lakes snow removal operations.
2. The Town of Mammoth Lakes contracts for the operation of a snow storage facility, often referred to as the ‘snow pit.’ The contractor is responsible for communicating and coordinating the opening and general operations of the facility. The facility is available to local contractors, all of which must be permitted to use the site by the Town. The contractor is responsible for maintaining the sites’ safety including, traffic control. All loads to the facility must be inspected and no hazardous materials may be used to release snow from trucks. Any trash accidentally collected with snow and trucked to the site will be removed from the site as snow melts.