

# TOWN OF RIDGEFIELD POLICY AND PROCEDURES PUBLIC SERVICES DEPARTMENT BEST PRACTICES

Standard Operating Procedures  
Ridgefield, Connecticut

Date: January 4, 2023

Policy: Snow Removal and Ice Control

Approval Date: January 4, 2023

**OBJECTIVE:** It is the goal and intent of the Town of Ridgefield to provide timely, efficient and cost-effective winter maintenance, snow removal and ice control on the roadways of the municipality for the safety and benefit of the Town's residents and the general motoring public.

**PROCEDURE:** The objective stated above will be achieved by implementation and execution of the procedures and tasks outlined in the Town of Ridgefield Winter Operations Snow Removal and Ice Control Procedures. Due to the many variables that are inherent in New England weather, each storm and/ or weather event may require slightly different effort and/ or emphasis on any number of maintenance tasks, which together determine the overall winter maintenance, snow removal or ice control strategy.

**LEVEL OF SERVICE:** It is not possible to maintain bare, snow and ice-free roads during a storm. It is the intention of the Town to provide practical, safe access to homes, businesses and municipal facilities during winter storms.

Pre-treatment for snow and ice control is initiated prior to the storm. Treatment for snow and ice control may take place during the active portion of the storm if deemed effective, or may be applied following the storm to assist in cleanup operations. It should be noted that salt has a much slower effect on melting snow and ice at temperatures below 20 degrees.

It is our policy to start to conduct snow removal operations upon accumulations of two-inches of snowfall. The Director of Public Services may, at his or her discretion based upon weather information reports, elect to remove snow at greater or lesser accumulations.

**COMMAND:** Direction of all winter maintenance activities for the Town of Ridgefield is vested with the Director of Public Services, or his or her designee.

**EXECUTION:** The policy outlined above is intended to serve as the normal operating procedures for winter maintenance, snow removal and/ or ice control for the Town of

Ridgefield. One or more of the following, which may delay or prevent the implementation of this policy, may affect all or any part of this Policy:

- Equipment Breakdown
- Snow Accumulation in Excess of 1 inch per hour
- Freezing Rain or Other Icing Conditions
- Traffic Congestion
- Emergencies
- Personnel illness

#### ADOPTION:

The Town of Ridgefield has adopted the updated Winter Operations Snow Removal and Ice Control Policy effective January 4, 2023. All residents are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the content as it describes the condition that one might expect to encounter before, during and following a winter storm event.

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FIRST SELECTMAN  
TOWN OF RIDGEFIELD

#### WINTER OPERATIONS SNOW REMOVAL AND ICE CONTROL PROCEDURES (Includes Roadways, Sidewalks, Parking Areas)

**EQUIPMENT:** The Department of Public Services utilizes all the assets of the department as needed to address snow emergencies,

**ROUTES:** Currently, the Town is divided into 17 plow and/or treatment routes, which includes 3 smaller routes for narrower roads. The Town uses one or more wheeled loaders in the downtown area to load snow for removal, as it may restrict parking or line of sight distances at intersections.

**MANPOWER:** The Town of Ridgefield has 22 full-time personnel assigned to its winter maintenance operations. In addition, a labor pool of 5 outside contractors are regularly called into service for plowing.

**MATERIALS:** The Town purchases 3000 tons of pretreated salt per season. This is stored in a covered barn at 60 South St. In the event more is needed, it will be replenished throughout the season. Winter maintenance routes are pre-treated with an application of treated salt. The treated salt is applied to the center of the roadway, where traffic can work the material traveling either way. The treated salt creates liquid brine, which melts snow and/or ice, and resists snow and ice packing on the roadway. The road crown further assists with spreading. The treated salt is only effective to approximately 20 degrees Fahrenheit.

COMMUNICATIONS: All of the Department of Public Services rolling stock is equipped with radios capable of transmitting and receiving. Each plow and equipment operator is assigned a unique call number. Base units are also maintained at the Highway Dept. garage and office, and each operator has the ability to communicate with the Town police and fire departments.

SCHOOLS: The Parks & Recreation Department, with assistance from the Department of Public Services when necessary, has the responsibility for the clearing of snow and the winter treatment of the Town schools' access roads and parking lots. On days when school is in session, winter maintenance efforts must be timed to coincide with bus routing and delivery. The Board of Education has responsibility for the clearing of snow and ice from school sidewalks and staircases.

- The Director of Public Services, or a designated official representative, shall contact the School Superintendent, or a designated official representative, and advise as to the condition of the municipality's roads, in order to determine the best course of action for the safety of students using school buses. The school representative(s) shall make the decision to cancel or postpone school for that day.

SIDEWALKS: Snow clearance will be the sole responsibility of the property owner or business owner with frontage abutting the sidewalk. Removal of snow from sidewalks is required within 8 hours of the cessation of the storm (but not later than noon of the following day). Sand and/ or salt must be broadcast as necessary. If snow has not been removed within 24 hours, the Board of Selectmen will instruct a contractor to do so at the property owner's / business owner's expense.

PARKING: There is NO OVERNIGHT PARKING on any Town street, or in any municipal parking lot, in the Town of Ridgefield. The Town has also enacted a winter parking ban effective from November 15<sup>th</sup> to April 15<sup>th</sup> of each year. From the time a storm begins until such time all streets are clear of snow and ice, the overnight parking ban is extended to include daylight hours. Parking in the street will result in the vehicle being towed at the owner's expense. Fines may also be levied at the discretion of the Police Department. The purpose of this winter parking ban is to allow winter maintenance crews unobstructed snow removal and ice control routes, as much as possible, to maintain the maximum effectiveness of their efforts.

PLOW ROUTE PRIORITIES: With a total of 190 miles of roads from which to remove snow and control ice, the Department of Public Services has to assign priorities for winter maintenance route activity. This is in order to maximize the effectiveness of their efforts for the motoring public.

- A. Resources will be diverted for Emergency Assistance for the Police and Fire Departments, and will take priority over all regular plowing/salting.
- B. School bus routes will be given the first priority during school days. In the event the busses are on the road during a snow event, each route will be maintained as best as possible depending on the type of storm and rate of snowfall.

- C. The business district will be maintained as much as possible during business hours, with the main snow clearance effort to be done at night during the snow parking curfew hours. Public safety is a very great concern in this area due to many cars and pedestrians in the area.
- D. Public parking areas at the rear of the Town offices, municipal buildings and municipal lots will be maintained by plowing during the winter storm. The application of slip resistant materials will be applied after the storm as determined to be needed by the Director of Public Services or the Parks and Recreation Superintendent.

STATE ROADS AND PUBLIC SIDEWALKS DO NOT RECEIVE WINTER MAINTENANCE BY THE TOWN OF RIDGEFIELD as part of its ongoing winter maintenance activities.

- A. Any State road within the Town limits is the responsibility of the State D.O.T. Office in Danbury [**Route 7, Route 33, Route 35, Route 116, Route 102 (Branchville Rd), and Route 822 (Catoonah St., Barry Ave., & West Mountain Rd)**].
- B. School sidewalks are the responsibility of the Board of Education.
- C. Public sidewalks are the responsibility of the business or homeowner with frontage on the sidewalk.

**DAMAGE TO PRIVATE PROPERTY:** The Town is not responsible for damage to private property that is located within the public right-of-way. The right-of-way (ROW) is typically 50' wide and extends approximately 10 feet to either side of the paved roadway surface. Property owners often confuse this area of public ROW with their property. Homeowners often extend lawns, place mailboxes, install sprinkler systems, plant flowers, shrubs & trees, and erect fences or stonewalls in these areas. These improvements often enhance the appearance of the property but create an obstruction to good maintenance of the roadway.

In the event of personal property damage, other than mailboxes, the Town of Ridgefield will only be responsible to repair or replace damaged property that is located on private property and not within the public ROW and that has actually been contacted or struck by the snow removal equipment. The Town's policy regarding mailbox damage is stated below.

**MAILBOXES:** In the event of mailbox damage, the Town of Ridgefield will only be responsible to repair or replace damaged mailboxes having been in actual contact with the snow removal equipment.

**DRIVEWAYS:** When residents, or their plowing contractors, are shoveling or plowing the entrance to their driveways, all snow must be pushed to the right side of the driveway (as you face the road); this will help minimize the amount of snow that will ultimately be pushed back into the driveways during the widening out phase of operations. Snow must not be thrown into the roads or plowed across the road. It is in violation of State and

local codes by causing hazardous road conditions and will only be pushed back where it came from. Violators could be subject to fines.

POST STORM OPERATIONS: As determined by the Department of Public Services:

1. Trucks and equipment shall be cleaned and repaired as needed to prepare for the next storm event
2. The snow banks resulting from previous accumulations shall be pushed back, or shelved, using the plow or other suitable equipment to make space for future snow storms
3. Damage to mailboxes shall be investigated, and repairs will likewise be done as needed.
4. Snow removal from Main St and the Downtown Business area will normally take place on the following night, or as soon as events allow. Snow removal from intersections and obstructed sight lines will take place as needed.

#### TERMINOLOGY:

- "Pre-Treat or Anti-Icing" – Applying treated salt to roads prior to a storm.
- "Re-Treat or De-Icing" – Applying treated salt to roads during a storm event wherever ice and snow may build up.
- "Open of Routes" – Keeping the center of the roads plowed and open for travel.
- "Push Back or Cleanup Routes" – Pushing snow back from curb to curb, as well as cleaning up all intersections and culs de sac.
- "Slush Off" – Plowing off any slush/snow that has loosened up from treating with salt.
- "Treated Salt" – A Type 2 treated salt that contains a mixture of deicing rock salt, magnesium chloride, and an organic based performance enhancer in the form of sugar cane molasses.