



# **TETON COUNTY SNOW PLOWING POLICY**

January 28, 2008

## **OBJECTIVES**

The following Policy has been established to provide information for the public and to establish guidelines for the Road and Bridge Department staff to follow in order to ensure consistent practices for snow removal during the winter seasons.

**Some variations in this plan may be necessary as special snow conditions may arise.**

## **BACKGROUND**

Teton County maintains approximately 265 miles of County Roads during the winter. In order to reasonably meet the public's expectations the following Policy will apply:

## **BASIS OF POLICY**

### **HOURS OF OPERATION**

In a snow event a check for snow will be conducted at 2:00 AM to allow time to have a majority of the roads open by 7:00 AM. At 2:00 AM if there are three (3) inches or more of snow and the conditions allow, we plow. If there are not three (3) inches of accumulation we check the roads at 7:00 AM. When blizzard conditions exist, plowing will begin when it subsides (not 2:AM). When plowing is required, the entire route is done in the most efficient order. Operator duty shifts are generally limited to a max of 12 hours per day for safety. Operations will be halted when: (a) service levels are reached, (b) coverage time has elapsed, (c) conditions are too hazardous, or (d) reasonable accomplishments cannot be made. During a major storm plows may only open one lane and will return to widen roads as conditions permit. After a major storm, cleanup operations will be on-going for multiple days.

### **ROUTE DETERMINATION:**

The road and route determination will be decided on by Road and Bridge Department. Typically, the order of plowing will follow the classification of the roads. The roads that will be plowed first will be the major arterials, then the minor arterials then the major collectors and finally the minor collectors. The roads will be plowed according to a route that allows the plow driver to complete the route with the minimal amount of back tracking. Therefore, some minor roads will

be plowed first in order to provide the most efficient plowing schedule. Any road that has historically not been plowed will continue to be unmaintained during the winter months unless it is determined that the road is adequate for plowing. Many factors will be considered when determining road adequacy including; road construction, Average Daily Traffic, alternate routes, maintainability during typical and atypical conditions and residence access requirements.

### **EMERGENCIES**

The Sheriff's Department should be contacted for all Emergencies requiring plowing or sanding. Plow equipment will not be dispatched from regular routes or called in for extra duty unless it is a **fire or medical emergency** coordinated through the Sheriff's Department. The decision to plow and/or sand will be made by the County Road & Bridge supervisor or road foreman.

### **SANDING ROADWAYS AND INTERSECTIONS**

Sand used for roads and intersections must be kept dry. Teton County currently has limited facilities to store sand therefore the supplies are limited. Until storage can be increased, sanding is done on a limited basis and for emergencies only. Sanding is not done during a snowfall event since the snow covers the sand and it is scraped away with subsequent plowing passes. Sanding in one circumstance does not create a reasonable expectation that the same area will always be sanded.

### **SNOWPLOW EQUIPMENT**

Snowplows have the right-of-way. Do not attempt to stop a snowplow or obstruct its path. Plows must maintain speed for maximum efficiency. **When approaching plowing equipment from the front, pull over and allow the plow to pass.** Snowplows make frequent stops and backup maneuvers. When approaching snow removal equipment from the rear, travel a minimum of 200 feet behind allowing for abrupt movements. If you are behind a plow that stops, stop your vehicle in such a way that your car looks into the driver's outside rearview mirror and please give them extra room. When following a plow be patient and pass only when conditions are safe and you know the driver sees you. Plowing equipment generally pushes snow to the passenger side (right side when looking at it from the rear). Never attempt to pass plowing equipment on the right side.

### **PERSONAL PROPERTY**

**Vehicles left in the County right-of-way obstructing snow plowing equipment will towed at the owners expense by request of the Teton County Road Department and the Teton County Sheriff's Department. (Idaho State Code 49-106A-11d)**

Mailboxes and posts in good condition generally withstand the force of snow plowed against them. In most cases, damage occurs during the plowing process because aged posts are unable to withstand the force of heavy or wet snow hitting them. Only those items that were damaged by actual contact with County equipment may be repaired at the County's expense, provided they were located and installed according to County standards. Property owners must show that the box and/or post was damaged by the Road Department equipment and not by heavy or wet snow pushed against it. The Road Department highly recommends that non-standard, expensive and /or decorative mailboxes be removed during the winter months and replaced with standard boxes and metal mailbox posts only. Alternatively, a resident is entitled to a cash equivalent based on

the cost of a standard mailbox and/or post. Large posts of wood, concrete, or steel are not permitted by county standards and could prove hazardous to motorists, thereby creating a liability for homeowners. (See ITD Standard Drawing No. H-4-B for the standard mailbox pullout and mounting requirements.) Mailboxes, fences and other items damaged during snow and ice removal are evaluated on a case-by-case basis. The Road Department is not responsible for clearing snow from around mailboxes.

**Place garbage cans out for pick up only on your designated day of service.**

**The County is not liable for damages to fences, vehicles, and /or other objects placed on County right-of-way.**

### **STRANDED MOTORISTS**

Plow operators may assist stranded motorists by contacting local law enforcement and/or emergency personnel. Plow operators will not attempt to remove a stuck vehicle unless initiated by law enforcement and approved by the County Road & Bridge supervisor or road foreman.

### **RESIDENTIAL PLOWING & PRIVATE DRIVES**

Normal snow removal operations may result in snow being deposited in private drives. Residents are responsible for clearing snow from private drives and sidewalks. Snow from private drives shall not be placed on the County roadway or shoulders. Do not plow snow from driveways onto or across County Roads. Piles of snow left on or near the road can freeze into a solid mass creating a hazardous situation for vehicles and snowplows. Piles of snow increase the chance of drifting onto the roadway. Accidents and damages caused by snow piles placed in the roadway may result in liability to the property owner. Anyone found plowing snow or who has plowed snow onto the county right-of-way can be charged with a misdemeanor.

## INFORMATION FOR THE PUBLIC

### WHAT YOU CAN DO

- A) When icy or slick conditions exist, motorists should use extreme caution and slow down.
  
- B) When heavy snow and blizzard conditions exist unnecessary travel should be avoided. Be prepared. Always have on hand at a minimum the following items: Non-perishable food and water for a minimum of five days. First aid kit and an extra supply of medication. Personal hygiene supplies. Extra clothing including gloves, footwear, blankets and sleeping bags. Extra food for pets and livestock. Flashlights and a radio(check with your local electric company for the newest non battery items). Snow removal equipment including a shovel. Avoid using candles. Have a safe alternate source of heat. Keep a full propane tank (if applicable). Have a private snow removal service scheduled.
  
- C) Make sure that your tires are in good condition. Have your tread checked before it snows. Tires adequate in dry conditions may no longer be appropriate for snow and ice conditions. Always carry approved traction devices (chains/cables) and learn how to install them. Carry a shovel, a towrope and a bag of cat litter to use under the tires for traction.
  
- D) Plan ahead, be prepared, and do not travel if you do not need to. Carry a cell phone. In case of a vehicle breakdown or becoming stuck in the snow, carry a survival kit consisting of blanket(s) or a sleeping bag, extra clothing, water, snacks, first aid kit, tire chains or cables, a tow strap, jumper cables, shovel, ice scrapper and a flashlight. Allow extra time for travel and drive accordingly. Let someone know your intended route and expected time of arrival. Keep the gas tank at least half full.
  
- E) If you are trapped in your car in a winter storm, **stay in the car**. Do not leave the car to look for help unless help is visible within 100 yards. Display a “call for help” sign. Hang a brightly colored cloth on the antenna to signal for help. To keep warm, turn on the car’s engine for about 10 minutes each hour. Run the heater and lights only (Avoid running the battery down). **Keep the snow away from the car’s exhaust pipe to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning.**
  
- F) Please caution your children not to play in the streets or on the snow berms within the road right-of-ways, this is very dangerous. Do not allow children to build snow caves in the snow berms. This could be fatal. Explain to your children that plow drivers may not see them or be able to stop in time to avoid hitting them.

### CONTACT INFORMATION:

Questions or concerns regarding County road snow removal should be directed to the Teton County Road and Bridge Department at (208) 354-2932, during normal business hours Mon-Fri (7:00 AM – 3:30 PM).

