

CITY OF ELLSWORTH



PUBLIC WORKS SNOW REMOVAL POLICY

Policy Accepted: 1/11/2017

Updated Policy 12/01/2025

**CITY OF ELLSWORTH PUBLIC WORKS SNOW
REMOVAL POLICY**

PURPOSE: The purpose of this policy is to provide a common understanding of the extent of the City of Ellsworth's winter road maintenance activity regarding snow and ice removal, to define the scope and level of services, to describe priority roads or routes, and to inform the public as to their responsibilities.

The City of Ellsworth **Public Works Department** reserves the right to exercise flexibility in these general guidelines depending upon the type of snow, wind and times of day the snow falls. In the delivery of snow removal service, efforts will be made to balance the needs of road safety, traffic demands, and employee safety as well as constraints involving time, money and equipment availability.

RESPONSIBILITIES: *The Elected Officials of Ellsworth or their designated representative is responsible for ensuring that operators are on the job in time to make roads accessible. When possible, plowing or sanding will be scheduled prior to heavy traffic levels to prevent snow compaction.

*The Department will be responsible for preventative maintenance programs for all equipment to ensure availability and reliability when needed. The Department will plan for and recommend necessary equipment upgrades and/or replacements in a timely manner to allow for proper budgeting of those expenditures.

*The Department is responsible for the selection, storage and application of abrasives, salt and chemicals for controlling snow and ice under differing weather conditions.

*Necessary safety equipment, safety training and operator training will be made available for employees to foster ongoing improvements in snow and ice control.

*Wherever possible, cooperative efforts between the County or State may be arranged to coordinate services, avoid duplication of effort, and in the joint use of facilities or materials. The sharing of winter maintenance information with other governmental units will be utilized to enhance the cost effectiveness and efficiency of service.

*To better obtain cooperation from the public, the Department will periodically communicate to residents, through City newsletters, posted notices, **social media** and the policies and ordinances regarding snow and ice removal and what services the public can reasonably expect.

GOALS & PRIORITIES: It is the goal and intent of the City of Ellsworth Street Department to have all driving lanes in the city plow within a 12 hour period. In case of snowfall long in duration, the streets will be plowed every 12 hours. The snow plowing procedure varies with the depth of snow fall as follows: Trace to 1" = Ice Control; 1+" = Plowing of Streets. The above amount is a benchmark only, used to signal when plowing efforts typically begin. Other conditions such as wind or icy rain may warrant an earlier response. Other maintenance, such as sanding, may begin earlier than plowing or as road conditions dictate, even when plowing is unnecessary.

*Priority 1 – Ellsworth Fire Hall

*Priority 2 – Parkview Manor Nursing Home

*Priority 3 - Clearing of sidewalks around all City owned buildings

*Priority 4 – Clearing of sidewalks and boulevards

*Priority 5 – City Arterial Streets for all commercial businesses

*Priority 6 - City alleyways

*Snow will be piled from the city owned parking lots and central business district to be loaded and hauled away when arterial streets have been sufficiently cleared of snow. At no time will piles of snow be allowed to accumulate to become a hazard or impede the normal flow of traffic.

*Snow and ice control operations will proceed if weather conditions do not endanger the safety of employees. Other conditions, such as equipment breakdown, or shortage of equipment operators, may necessitate changes from normal operations.

MONITORING WEATHER CONDITONS: The Ellsworth Elected Officials will continue to monitor weather conditions during regular operating hours via the Weather Channel and on the computer via state and national weather links. During off hours for the Public Works Department, Elected Officials will monitor the streets and notify the Public Works Department if snowfall accumulations reach one-half to .75 inches or of freezing rain. This notification will allow time to begin salting and sanding before the snow becomes too thick or ice develops.

USE OF SALT & CHEMICALS ON STREETS: In compliance with State Legislation, the Public Works Department shall utilize salt and chemicals only at such places as upon intersections or upon high speed or arterial roadways where vehicle traction is particularly critical and only if, in the opinion of the road authorities, removal of snow and ice or reduction of hazardous conditions by blading, plowing or sanding cannot be accomplished within a reasonable period of time.

HOW SNOW WILL BE PLOWED/REMOVED: Snow will be plowed in a manner so as to minimize any traffic obstructions. The center of the roadway will be plowed first. The snow shall be pushed to the right side of the roadway (traffic side) whenever possible. The discharge shall go onto the boulevard's areas of the streets. Plow operators will take extreme care so as not to push snow onto residential sidewalk areas. In times of extreme snowfall, streets will not always be able to be completely cleared of snow immediately after snowfall has ceased, final street cleanup may not be completed until the second day of plow operations. The **Public Works** Department is responsible for snow removal and ice control on all city owned sidewalks. Normally this will involve **Public Works** Department facilitating snow removal starting with sidewalk sweeping for lighter snowfalls, to plow and/or blow snow as necessary.

PLACING SNOW OR ICE ON PUBLIC STREETS OR CITY PROPERTY: It is unlawful for any person not acting under contract with the City to remove snow or ice from private property, such as driveways and sidewalks, and place in such quantity or manner as to cause a hazard to travel on public streets without proper arrangements for the immediate removal. It is unlawful for any person not acting under contract with the City to place or deposit any snow or ice upon City property. It is also the responsibility of the residents to clean snow from the following areas: driveway approaches, around trash cans, mailboxes, and newspaper tubes. Residents are also encouraged to "adopt" any fire hydrant located near their property to ensure clear access by the fire department.

PUBLIC COMPLAINTS OR REQUESTS: Residents with requests, complaints or concerns regarding snow and ice removal should call the Ellsworth City Hall at 507-967-2373, where staff will relay the information to the Elected Official. Depending on the

nature of the request or concern, the Elected Official will either take the appropriate action necessary or direct City Hall staff to respond to the residents.

OTHER SNOW RELATED CONCERNS: In the process of plowing snow, crew members at times do inadvertently allow the plow to “climb” the curb and disturb the sod. This is especially true in late fall/early spring plowing. If sod is damaged, property owners are responsible for minor repairs. If damage is excessive, residents should call Ellsworth City Hall to report the damage. Mailboxes that are physically hit or damaged by city snowplows will be repaired by the city. Mailboxes knocked down by the weight of the snow thrown from the plow are considered the owner’s responsibility to replace.

PARKING OF VEHICLES/TOWING: As there is no official policy for alternate side parking within the City of Ellsworth, residents are obligated to move or remove parked vehicles, trucks, trailers or any personal property from the boulevard and roadway to facilitate the effective plowing of the roadway. If snowplows are forced to go around parked vehicles, trucks, trailers or personal property, the snow surrounding the vehicle, truck, trailers or personal property can create a hazard to the traveling public as well as plow operators and equipment.

Vehicles that have been parked on ANY street longer than 12 hours and have prohibited the complete clearing of the street may be ticketed by the Nobles County Sheriff’s Department and may be towed at the owner’s expense.

ACCIDENTS DURING SNOW REMOVAL OPERATIONS: Should an employee have an accident of any type during snow removal operations, they must immediately notify their Elected Official and City Hall Staff stating the type of accident and the conditions that

created the accident. If the accident involves personal injury or a vehicle accident, the operator must remain on the scene of the accident until the police arrive. After the operator has informed the police of conditions and other pertinent data concerning the accident, the Elected Official will determine whether the operator will continue with plowing operations. In the event of a very minor accident that does not involve another vehicle or personal injury; the Elected Official will determine if the accident warrants calling the Nobles County Sheriff's Office. This is done to ensure that the Nobles County Sheriff's Office are not contacted for insignificant accidents such as bent sign posts, etc. and the plow truck may continue its plowing.

DECLARATION OF SNOW EMERGENCY: The declaration of a snow emergency will be made by the Elected Officials or the designated representative. The public will be informed via announcements on area radio stations, social media or **posted notices**.

SEVERE WEATHER/EMERGENCY VEHICLE ASSISTANCE: In the interest of public safety, city crews may **aid** emergency vehicles when requested, within a reasonable response distance. This may include plowing and applying ice control materials to county, state, township and private roadways if manpower and equipment are available.

POLICY REVIEW: In an effort to evaluate the effectiveness of snow removal operations and in consideration of equipment improvements, technological advances, changes in manpower, plowing routes, financing, new laws or ordinances, this policy will be reviewed annually each fall by the **Public Works** Department and Ellsworth City Council.

PERSONNEL & PHONE NUMBERS All **Public Works** department personnel are also equipped with a cell phone for communication between themselves, City Hall and the Nobles County Sheriff's Office.

*City Hall		507-967-2373
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*City Clerk	Dawn Huisman	507-360-6577
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*Janitor	Jean Onken	507-967-2373
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*Public Works Department Personnel (Both Part-time Intermittent):

Joe Deutsch	507-360-0788
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Brett Sanders	507-508-0972
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Contracted Water/Wastewater Operator:

Aaron Altman	507-227-7736
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*Mayor: (Buildings, Weed Inspector)	Colette Smythe	507-920-6901
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*Council Members: (Streets)	Mike Lewis	605-351-2509
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(Buildings)	Sandy Sanders	605-351-8246
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(Parks)	Chad Schultz	712-470-5977
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(Water/Sewer)	Tonya Zitzloff	612-801-4955
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*Ellsworth Fire Chief:	Terry DeBeer	507-220-1339
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*Nobles County Sheriff's Department:		507-295-5400
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*Grand Prairie Township Maintainer Driver:

Greg Huisman	507-360-6570
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Updated Contacts 12/01/2025