



DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

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Thomas Garmon Director of Public Works

The Town of Boxborough Department of Public Works is pleased to issue “A Resident’s Guide to Winter Snow Removal Operations.” The intent of this guide is to advise Boxborough residents of the DPW winter snow plowing and salting procedures and to ask your assistance so that the town roads can be restored to normal conditions as quickly as possible. Your cooperation is essential if the DPW is to achieve this objective.

The following is a general description of Boxborough’s snow removal procedure. Each storm is different but we try to follow our snow removal procedure as closely as possible.

The beginning of the storm

When a snowstorm begins, the DPW responds by treating the roads with a liquid magnesium/salt mix. Treating the roads at this time serves two purposes: it prevents the snow from bonding the surface and creating ‘hard pack’ and it provides traction to keep traffic moving. Four spreading trucks are used for this operation.

During the storm

Plowing operations begin when approximately 3 inches of snow has accumulated on the roadways. Eight DPW vehicles are used to remove snow from the roadways and one loader is used to keep the Town buildings accessible. The Town is divided into 4 different assigned plow routes with two trucks per route. Each route has one big truck and one small truck dedicated to it. Once the plowing begins the vehicles stay on their routes until the storm subsides. These routes are designed so that it takes approximately 3 to 3 1/2 hours to complete one round, barring any equipment break-downs, heavy traffic or an unanticipated emergency elsewhere in Town. The main objective ‘during’ the storm is to keep the roadways passable. At the end of the storm the plows begin the clean-up phase of the storm. This involves the cleaning of intersection and cul-de-sacs and pushing back the snow banks to maintain the full pavement widths of the roads. Residents may want to wait until the roads have been widened out before clearing the entrance of their driveways.

One major problem with clearing the roads is snow being thrown back into the road. This creates a hazard to traffic and requires DPW staff to return and clear it from the street. It is against the Town’s Anti-Littering Bylaw to throw snow back into public streets. Anyone found to be depositing snow back into the roadway is subject to a \$50 fine. Another problem that we encounter is vehicles parked in the roads. This creates an extreme hazard not only for vehicle traffic but for the snow plow vehicles as well. We understand that things happen and sometimes a vehicle is left in the way and we try to work with people to get them where they need to be. When all our efforts are exhausted, we need to call the Police Department to enforce the Town’s bylaws. This is not our preferred course of action, but we need to ensure that roads are opened for public safety reasons.

The area that people have the most concern with is, MAILBOXES. We do not deliberately knock over or damage mailboxes. The primary cause of mailboxes being knocked down or damaged 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 the storm and/ or snow banks. Residents are encouraged to place mailboxes at the maximum allowable distance from the pavement away from any street drains. Mailboxes should be inspected regularly to ensure that they are in good condition. Mailboxes damaged by snow plows will be replaced with a standard U.S. mailbox.

Following the storm

Once the snowfall has ended and all the roads are cleaned up, post-storm treatment and removal begins. The treatment method is based on conditions at that time. All roads that need treatment are treated with a liquid magnesium chloride/ salt mixture to improve traction and promote the melting of any snow remaining on the roadway.

A resident's guide to winter snow removal operations and procedures

Residents can assist the DPW during snowstorms by following these suggestions.

1. Observe all parking bans.
2. Reduce your speed and drive cautiously
3. Remain off the road during snowstorms unless absolutely necessary.
4. Do not allow children to make snow forts at the edge of the road.
5. Do not plow, blow or throw snow back into the roadway.
6. 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. Doing this might keep you from clearing your driveway more than once.
7. Please have patience. Snow plowing is a time and labor intensive job. We treat approximately 40 miles of roadway. Four routes are being treated simultaneously in order speed up the opening of all roadways.

The DPW is devoted to providing the residents with dependable and efficient snow removal in the shortest time possible. Your patience and cooperation will benefit all of us during the snowstorm.

Route 111, Massachusetts Avenue

Route 111 is a state road under the jurisdiction of the State. We have no authority on this road. Any questions or concerns should be directed to the District 3 office in Worcester @ 1-508-929-3800.

Sand available for residents

Residents can pick up sand at the DPW facility at 577 Mass. Ave Monday thru Friday, 7:30am to 4:00pm. This service is for home owners only and we ask that you only take what you need.

Contractors are not allowed to get sand at the DPW.

We at the DPW would like to thank you for your assistance and patience.