



Howard Public Works Department

Snow Plowing Operations

THE BASICS

Snow and ice control are performed on the following:

- 106 miles of streets (approximately 325 lane miles)
- 59 miles of sidewalks
- 125 cul-de-sacs

To put 106 miles of streets into perspective, consider that each narrow street must be plowed at least once in each direction (or two passes) to clear the roadway. Most village streets must be plowed at least twice in each direction (or four passes). Busy high-traffic volume roads will be plowed multiple times, meaning eight or more passes. Thus, there are some 400 or more "lane miles" in Howard, which when set end to end, would stretch from Green Bay, Wisconsin to Indianapolis, Indiana!

SNOW PLOWING

Snow plowing will commence when, in the opinion of the Public Works Department, sufficient snow or ice exists to be a hazard to traffic. Several factors are considered when deciding when to plow, such as the amount and density of snow, wind speeds, drifting, temperature, duration of the storm, time the storm starts and ends, the amount of time our drivers have been plowing and peak traffic times. These factors all influence how long the snow plow operation will take to complete.

Typically, village-wide plowing operations will commence at or near the end of 2 inches and greater storm event. Residential streets are not typically plowed for snow events totaling less than 2 inches. In addition, residential streets are not normally salted. These policies are intended to minimize the expenditure of your tax dollars and reduce environmental impacts. Attention is given to village streets according to the designated priorities as follows:

Priority 1 - Primary streets (arterials and collectors), bridges and hills

Priority 2 – Low-volume residential streets (locals) and sidewalks

Priority 3 - Dead ends and cul-de-sacs

Priority 4 – Parking lots and parks

[Click here to view the Prioritized Route Map.](#)

When larger heavy snowstorms are occurring during peak travel times, primary streets will be continuously plowed throughout the storm. Residential streets typically are not plowed until the storm ends. Where steep hills or other safety concerns exist, a street may be advanced to a higher priority for plowing. For operating efficiency, some lower priority streets may be done when equipment is in the area rather than doubling back at a later time.

It is the village's policy goal to complete snow plowing operations for routine snow events of 5 inches or less in under 12 hours, after snowfall has ended. Infrequent larger snow events, six inches and greater that occur 2 to 3 times per year, will extend the time to complete snow plowing operations, generally 12 to 16 hours after snowfall has ended. Significant snow events totaling 12 inches to 18 inches will typically take 16 to 22 hours complete.

Obviously, it is the village's desire to have streets plowed as soon as possible so that you can get back to your routine activities. Two major factors that are beyond the village's control are 1) the overall length of the storm event and 2) the time of the day when the storm actually ends. These two facts dictate when village-wide plowing operations will begin and to a great extent determine when plowing operations will be completed.

Plows typically make two to four passes down a street to clear it curb to curb. The reason for plowing the snow back to the curb is to maintain the road width, expose catch basins, and keep roads safe for motorists and pedestrians where no sidewalks exist. It is best to wait to shovel out your driveway approach, if possible, after we've finished plowing at least twice on each side of the street. This will minimize the amount of wet, heavy, compacted snow that collects at the end of your driveway.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Parked and abandoned vehicles present obstacles to plows attempting to get as close to the curb as possible. We regularly need to plow streets again the day after a snow event to plow where vehicles had previously been parked, to plow corners back to the curb, to expose catch basins and scrape accumulated ice and snow pack. This may result in snow being deposited in your driveway apron after you have already shoveled.

Cul-de-sacs may be partially plowed during larger snow events leaving the center of the cul-de-sac to be plowed at the end of initial snow removal operations or for the next day.

Assume garbage and recycling collection will be collected on your regular day unless informed otherwise. Collection may be delayed or advanced a few hours due to the timing of the snow storm. If the snow event will begin after lunch on your garbage day, you may want to put your garbage out the night before the storm as collection may begin earlier than 6:00 am in an attempt to beat the storm. If the snow storm begins the day before your garbage day, consider placing your garbage at the curb at 5:30 or 6:00 am to minimize that chance snow from the plows may knock over your container.

Do not place garbage containers in the street. Containers must be placed on the driveway apron, at the curb, or in a shoveled-out space on the grass terrace area at the curb (not on snow bank or in the street). This will allow plows to scrape the street as close as possible to the curb.