

RESOLUTION #09-004

Spring Lake Township, Scott County, Minnesota

A RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING A SNOW AND ICE CONTROL POLICY

WHEREAS, the Town Board (“Board”) of Spring Lake Township (“Town”) is the road authority and provides maintenance for it’s town roads;

WHEREAS, the Board, as the road authority, provides for snow and ice control on the town roads;

WHEREAS, the Board secures its snow and ice control services through contract with an independent contractor (“Contractor”);

WHEREAS, the Board determines it is in the best interest of the Town to develop a policy to set out how snow and ice control activities will be conducted on town roads considering the Town’s limited resources;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Board hereby adopts the following as the snow and ice control policy for the Town;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that any Contractor performing snow or ice control services for the Town shall follow this policy.

I. POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

In developing this policy for how to best undertake snow and ice control activities in the Town, the Board has had to balance a number of factors including, but not limited to, the following: public safety; the amount of funds available for these activities; the wish to maintain an efficient transportation system; the ability to deliver emergency services; avoid damage to Town property and personal property; and the cost effective allocation of resources. A further explanation of some of these policy considerations follows:

1. **Budgetary**: The funds the Town has available for snow and ice control are derived from two sources. The first is the town road and bridge tax levy that is set by the town electors at the annual town meeting held in March. The second source of funds comes from the gas tax imposed and collected by the state, a small portion of which is distributed to towns to help maintain their roads. The Board has no direct control over either source of funding. A proposed levy is submitted to the town electors at the annual town meeting, but the actual amount of the Town’s road & bridge levy is determined solely by a vote of the electors.

2. **Contract for Services**: The Board contracts with an independent contractor for snow and ice control. Because the Town obtains snow and ice control services through a non-exclusive contract, it does not have direct control over the availability of personnel, equipment, or the timing of the service delivery. The Town indicates through this policy and the service contract the work to be performed and the performance expectations, but the contractor must remain free to exercise initiative, judgment, and discretion in how best to perform or provide the services.
3. **Safety, Equipment Damage, & Effectiveness**: Snow and ice control operations will be conducted only when weather conditions do not endanger the safety of operators or pose an unreasonably risk of damaging equipment. Once initiated, operations will be suspended if conditions deteriorate to the point that operations become unsafe for operators because of factors including, but not limited to, severe cold, significant winds, limited visibility, accumulation of ice, or rapid accumulation of snow. Operations will also be delayed or suspended if existing or anticipated conditions indicate the operations will not be effective.
4. **Environmental Protection**: The Town is concerned about the potential effects of road salt on the environment and, wherever possible, will take reasonable steps to minimize its use. Where available and financially reasonable, storage of road salt or salt/sand mix will be in such a manner as to minimize or prevent run-off. Additionally, in the event that snow containing road salt needs to be hauled for removal, every reasonable effort will be made to deposit the snow in a manner that minimizes or prevents runoff into public waters or other environmentally sensitive areas.

II. TOWN ROADS THAT ARE SNOWPLOWED

Unless closed because of a snow emergency, all town roads are normally snowplowed by the Town.

III. TOWN ROAD SNOWPLOWING PRIORITIES

In order to provide for the most efficient and effective snowplowing as possible given the Town's limited resources, the independent contractor will work with the Board to determine the snow plowing route. During heavy snow events main through roads may be plowed initially before plowing begins on the regular snow plowing route.

IV. EMERGENCY RESPONSE VEHICLE ASSISTANCE

If law enforcement requests snow removal to assist emergency vehicles to respond to an emergency situation, reasonable efforts will be made to accommodate the request.

V. WHEN SNOWPLOWING BEGINS

The following criteria shall be considered when determining when to begin snow and ice control operations:

- An evaluation of the immediate and anticipated weather conditions.
- The likely effectiveness of operations.
- Safety of employees.
- If an unreasonable risk of damaging equipment exists.
- Amount of snow accumulation and/or drifting.
- Sever icy conditions that seriously affect travel.
- Time of snowfall in relationship to heavy use of the roads.

Snow and ice control operations are expensive and involve the use of limited resources. Consequently, operations will commence only when necessary or appropriate.

VI. WHEN SNOWPLOWING WILL BE DELAYED OR SUSPENDED

As stated in the policy considerations above, snow and ice control operations will be delayed or suspended if the safety of operators is at risk, conditions pose an unreasonable risk of damaging equipment, or if operations will not be effective because of existing or anticipated conditions.

VII. HOW SNOW WILL BE PLOWED

Snow will be plowed in a manner as to minimize traffic obstructions. Snow will normally be plowed from the center of the road first. Then snow will be pushed from left to right until at least the main traveled portion of the road has been cleared. Snow will normally be discharged to the sides of the road unless it is determined that the snow should be hauled to another location for storage. Because of limited resources and restrictions on the use of salt, blacktopped roads will not usually be cleared down to bare blacktop.

In the event of equipment failure, extreme snowfall, or other unanticipated events including the availability or need to rest snowplow crews, deviation from these standards may be appropriate.

Snow will be plowed as close as practicable to mailboxes located in the road right-of-way. It shall be the responsibility of property owners to clear snow from around their mailboxes to enable mail delivery.

Snowplowing unavoidably results in snow being deposited on driveways and approaches. Because the Town does not have the resources available to it to clear the ends of driveways and approaches, it is the responsibility of land owners to remove snow from their driveways and approaches.

VIII. SANDING, SALTING, AND CHIPPING

The Town must consider the cost, environmental impact, public safety, and availability of staff and equipment when deciding if, when, and to what extent to apply sand and salt to paved roads or chip to gravel roads. Furthermore, the state legislature has imposed the following limitations on the use of salt by road authorities:

“In order to:

(1) minimize the harmful or corrosive effects of salt or other chemicals upon vehicles, roadways, and vegetation;
(2) reduce the pollution of waters; and
(3) reduce the driving hazards resulting from chemicals on windshields;
road authorities, including road authorities of cities, responsible for the maintenance of highways or streets during periods when snow and ice are prevalent, shall utilize such salt or other chemicals only at such places as upon hills, at 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, sanding, including chemicals needed for free flow of sand, or natural elements cannot be accomplished within a reasonable time.” Minn. Stat. § 160.215.

To the extent sand and salt is applied to paved roads or chip is applied to gravel roads, priority will be given to the following areas in the order listed:

- Hills, controlled intersections, bridges, and curves.
- Major arterial and collector streets.
- School zones.
- Bus routes.
- Commercial areas.
- Residential areas.
- Rural areas.

IX. SNOWPLOWING OF PRIVATE PROPERTY

The Town will not provide for the snowplowing or sanding of private property except when requested to do so by law enforcement to provide access for emergency vehicles responding to an emergency.

X. DEPOSITING SNOW IN PUBLIC RIGHTS-OF-WAY

It is unlawful for anyone to deposit any snow or ice in a public road right-of-way or to otherwise obstruct a public road. Minn. Stat. §§ 160.2715, subd. 5(a)(1); 169.42, subd. 1. Depositing snow or ice in a road also increases snowplowing costs, creates a potential public safety hazard, and could damage equipment.

XI. OBJECTS WITHIN TOWN ROAD RIGHTS-OF-WAY

Public road rights-of-way are used for a variety of purposes that are outside of the direct control of the Town. Neither the Town nor the independent contractor shall be responsible for damages caused by the contractor to mailboxes, lawn sprinklers, utility structures, sod, landscaping materials, vegetation, or other personal or real property located in the road right-of-way in violation of Town ordinances. Complaints regarding damage to property should be reported to the Town.

It is the responsibility of owners to keep the road rights-of-way clear of vehicles, trailers, trash cans, and other items of personal property in order to facilitate the proper snow and ice control operations. If an owner fails to keep the road right-of-way clear of personal property, the owner becomes responsible for promptly clearing the snow left in the right-of-way around the item. If the Board determines personal property left in the road right-of-way poses an unreasonable risk to public safety, or significantly interferes with snowplowing operations, it will have the item removed from the right-of-way at the owner’s expense. While reasonable efforts will be made to avoid damaging private property, snow and ice control operations may result in damage to the property of others. Where private property damage does occur, it is the policy of the Town to handle damages as outlined in Section XII below.

XII. COMPLAINTS AND REQUESTS FOR FURTHER SERVICES

Complaints and requests for further services regarding snow and ice control or damage will be taken during normal working hours and handled in accordance with Town procedures. Complaints and requests for further services should be directed to the Board. If the contractor is aware of complaints or requests for additional services, it shall forward such complaints or requests to the Board for consideration.

XIII. REVIEW OF POLICY

The Board will periodically review this policy, taking into consideration any changing conditions in the Town’s circumstances, any complaints or comments received with respect to snow and ice control procedures.

Adopted this _____ day of _____, 20__.

BY THE TOWN BOARD

ATTEST

Town Board Chair

Town Clerk