

CITY OF PORTSMOUTH



PRESS RELEASE

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December 5, 2016

The Department of Public Works reminds residents of snow removal policies and safety procedures

PORTSMOUTH, NH – With the first arrival of significant snowfall this winter, the Department of Public Works would like to remind the community of their general snow removal processes and to be cautious of their surroundings during storm events.

The Process

Public Works does all it can to control its snow removal from 106 miles of roadways and approximately 75 miles of sidewalks in order to ensure safe passage for vehicular and pedestrian traffic. Generally, Portsmouth's snow plowing operations begin when snow levels exceed two inches, at which time a citywide parking ban typically goes into effect in order to facilitate snow removal. A 45 member crew begins the snow removal process by simultaneously plowing 24 plow routes, each of which usually takes three hours to complete.

"We strive to provide responsive, efficient and professional service in order to ensure that the hospital, schools and businesses can stay open and people can get to work," says Peter Rice, Director of Public Works.

The order in which the roads are plowed and sidewalks are cleared has been carefully prioritized according to traffic volume and public safety requirements. Once the roads are cleared, sidewalk clearing begins. The City's sidewalk tractors with a plow attachment can clear snow at approximately five miles per hour when snow does not exceed six inches. As soon as the snow exceeds six inches, a snow blower attachment must be put on the sidewalk tractors, which reduces snow removal to .5 miles per hour.

"One of the most challenging aspects with sidewalk clearing in densely populated areas is finding spots for the snow to go that will provide a convenient path for the majority of people and not result in windows, cars, bushes, trees or other property being damaged," says Todd Croteau, General Foreman for Public Works.

More residents than ever before are enjoying the perk of having their sidewalks cleared thanks to the City's widening of sidewalks where sewer work has taken place. Only sidewalks that are five feet wide can accommodate the four foot wide sidewalk tractors.

Residents Can Help Make Snow Removal Faster & Safer

Improved snow removal can be achieved by a partnership between residents and the City. Snow clearing time is greatly reduced when residents clear sidewalks of debris, trash cans and recycling bins prior to a storm, and by not placing snow in the streets and honoring street parking bans.

"Less efficient snow removal occurs every time we have to stop to remove objects from the sidewalk, clean it and put the objects back, or plow around cars," says Mr. Croteau. "In addition, if a sidewalk snow blower hits something hard buried in the snow it often breaks its shear pin, which must then be replaced."

If you find yourself behind a snow plow, please keep in mind that the driver has low visibility, typically 10 feet or less, and may not be able to see you. Please slow down and follow well behind the plow with your headlights on. This practice should apply to all City vehicles. Some residents may remember that a Public Works employee was injured earlier in the year when loading trash into a compacter truck on Lang Road and a vehicle slid in the snow, pinning him between the vehicles.

According to Rice, this incident is a reminder of the importance of cautious driving during winter weather conditions and respecting these work zones. "It is so important for drivers to be cognizant of their surroundings, especially when navigating around City vehicles such as plows or trash haulers. Please be mindful of your speed and distance between other vehicles as you drive this winter; your patience during these times is essential in keeping people safe."

Parking Bans

The City has made it possible for residents to park in the High-Hanover Parking Facility for only \$3 during snow emergencies and snow removals. Residents must simply show a valid driver's license or vehicle registration with a Portsmouth address to the booth attendant when exiting the garage. Vehicles may be parked at the facility two hours prior to a parking ban going into effect until two hours after its official conclusion. The city also makes six parking lots available for parking during snowstorms. See <http://www.cityofportsmouth.com/publicworks/snowbanparkinglots.htm> for a map.

The Department of Public Works announces a snow parking ban via several avenues: a recording on the snow phone at 766-7669 (SNO-SNOW), tweets from [@PortsmouthDPW](#) and [@ParkPortsmouth](#), posts at www.cityofportsmouth.com, announcements in the local media and on Local Government Cable Channel 22, and via signs at all entrances to the City. A similar procedure is used to announce the ban's end.