

CITY OF PORTSMOUTH



CITY'S SNOW REMOVAL PROCEDURE FOCUSES ON SAFE PASSAGE

Although nothing can be done about how much it snows, Portsmouth's Department of Public Works does the best it can to remove it from 136 miles of roadways and approximately 50 miles of sidewalks in order to ensure safe passage for vehicular and pedestrian traffic.

The Department of Public Works typically begins addressing snow storms by applying salt to the roads to prevent snow from bonding to the pavement. Plowing operations generally commence when snow levels exceed two inches, at which time a citywide parking ban usually goes into effect in order to facilitate snow removal. The City has 24 plow routes, a complete circuit of which takes approximately three hours to complete.

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

The order in which the roads are plowed and sidewalks are cleared is prioritized according to traffic volume and public safety requirements. The city's sidewalk tractors with a plow attachment can clear snow at approximately 5 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 0.5 miles per hour. Only sidewalks that are five feet or wider can accommodate the sidewalk tractors.

"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 Jeff Boucher, Highway Foreman for the Portsmouth Department of Public Works.

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, do not put snow in the street and honor street parking bans.

"Every time we have to stop to remove objects from the sidewalk, clean it and put the objects back or plow around cars results in less efficient snow removal," says Mr. Boucher. "In addition, if a sidewalk snow blower hits something hard buried in the snow it often breaks its shear pin, which disables the snow blower."

If you find yourself driving behind a snow plow, please keep in mind that its driver has low visibility and may not be able to see you. Please slow down and follow well behind the plow.

During snow related parking bans, the City has made it possible for residents to park in the High-Hanover Parking Facility for only \$3. 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 in the facility from the time of a declared parking ban advanced notice 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 seven 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. Residents should note that trash and recycling collection continue on the normal daily schedule during snow and ice storms.

Snow plowing and removal operations in Portsmouth continue long after the snow stops falling. Remaining sidewalks are cleared and snow is carted away from various locations including the downtown business district to the snow disposal site on Pierce Island.