

FAQs for Snow Operations (page 1)

1. How does the City conduct plowing operations (what is the main objective/priority)?

During a storm event the primary objective is to keep main roadways as safe and accessible as possible. To accomplish this, the snow is plowed from the travel lanes to the side of the roadway as efficiently as possible beginning with the highest priority routes. During significant snow events the large amount of snow that is plowed from the roadways creates a snow berm along the side of the roadway. Driveways and sidewalks are often affected by snow berms as plowing occurs. This is an unavoidable part of the snow plowing process. The City does not remove the berms from driveways or sidewalks.

2. When a resident calls to inquire about how to increase the level of priority for their street, what is the correct procedure for handling and what should be told to the caller?

Reno Direct, Council Liaisons, or employees receiving calls can obtain the name of the street along with information from the citizen and enter into our CRM Tracking System (QAlert). During the annual process of updating the Snow and Ice Control Plan, Public Works will review the requests that were received during the year and consider priority adjustments as appropriate.

3. What is the procedure to help seniors, disabled, or individuals with medical issues to get to medical appointments, receive medical attention, or if just stranded?

Residents should call 9-1-1 for medical emergencies. Public Works does work in partnership with agencies in emergency services to ensure access for emergency responders.

Non-emergency appointments should be rescheduled. Residents can also make arrangements for transportation (i.e. friends, family, neighbors, cab companies, shuttle services, and RTC).

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4. When a resident requests a call back from a Public Works supervisor or manager, what is the procedure and what should the caller be told?

The resident's contact information and their issue will be entered in the CRM Tracking System (QAlert) and routed to Public Works. The caller needs to be advised that Public Works is currently handling the storm event. It is difficult for them to return all phone calls, but they will make every effort to address all concerns.

5. When a resident calls to complain that their street has not been plowed or sanded yet, how should those calls be handled and what should be said to the resident?

Plow operators will plow and/or sand on main roadways (priority 1) until those streets are clear and safe. The operators then continue into the collector streets (priority 2) until those streets are passable with one lane in and one lane out. Once the collector streets (priority 2) have been addressed, operators will then go back and clear those streets by widening them to more than one lane in and one lane out. Crews will then begin plowing residential areas (priority 3 & 4) as conditions and resources allow. Priority is given to the routes with the highest snow accumulations.

6. What happens to the calls/service requests that are sent over to Public Works?

All calls and service requests are forwarded to the on-duty supervisors and addressed as resources and conditions allow. Please remember that Public Works follows the established Snow and Ice Control Plan to be the most effective and efficient during snow operations.

7. When a resident lives on a cul-de-sac and wants to know if we plow cul-de-sacs, what is the correct answer to tell them?

Generally, Public Works does not plow cul-de-sacs because there is no where to place to push the snow without blocking driveways.

8. What should be explained to a resident when they inquire about the removal of the large piles of snow on the side of the road?

Due to limited resources, snow piles are generally not removed unless they are creating a hazard.

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9. What should be explained to a resident when they inquire about the large amount of snow that is left in the center lane?

The objective is to clear travel lanes for traffic so the roadways are passable. Center lanes will not necessarily be plowed unless they are creating a hazard.

10. What should be explained to a resident when they inquire about only one travel lane in each direction being cleared?

Plowing one lane in and one lane out provides emergency access and allows the plows to cover many more miles during storm events making them much more effective.

11. What should be explained to a resident when they inquire about the berm that was left in front of their driveway?

During significant snow events the large amount of snow that is plowed from the roadways creates a snow berm along the side of the roadway. Driveways and sidewalks are often affected by snow berms as plowing occurs. This is an unavoidable part of the snow plowing process. Residents are responsible to clear the berms that block their driveway. The City does not have the resources to clear berms from every driveway.

12. What should be explained to a resident when they inquire about the snow that was pushed on to their already shoveled sidewalk?

When plowing the streets snow is plowed to the side of the road which sometimes includes getting snow on sidewalks. The drivers make every attempt not to push snow on sidewalks but sometimes it is unavoidable. The City does not have the resources to remove snow from sidewalks.

13. When a caller asks about plows that are seen with their plows up, how should that be answered?

There are times when the operators must have the plows up. Reasons include: snow has bonded to the roadway and formed into ice making plowing impossible; conducting sanding operations at intersections, curves, bridges, and inclines; ran out of sand/salt and traveling to get more.

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14. How does the City use sand/salt (i.e. end of the streets, grades, prior to storm, etc)?

Sand/salt is utilized to improve traction and to speed up the melting process. Sand/salt is primarily used at intersections, inclines, curves and bridges. Sand/ salt is generally applied after plowing when ice is present on the roadway.

15. How often is the Snow Plan updated and what is the process?

The snow plan is updated each fall. Public Works begins the updating process by conducting meetings with plow operators to gather input and suggestions regarding the previous season. A supervisor is also assigned to drive each snow route and review the route for any changes in traffic volume, grades, etc. Additionally, Public Works takes input from Police and Fire to ensure any new needs are addressed. After all input and suggestions have been received, Public Works makes the appropriate changes to the annual plan.

16. When a caller asks how many plows/staff are working on snow operations, what should be said?

The City of Reno has 17 trucks that are mounted with plows and/or sand spreaders. Every effort is made to fully staff each storm with all available resources. During large events, crews are scheduled to work 24 hours a day on 2 twelve hour shifts.

17. Why would a street not be cleared down to pavement?

During extreme cold temperatures, snow can bond to the pavement and turn to ice very quickly. When this bonding effect occurs it is very difficult, if not impossible, to plow without jeopardizing safety and damaging equipment. During these conditions crews may only be able to apply salt/sand to roadways to improve traction.

18. What occurs when the weather changes and it starts snowing during snow operations?

At anytime if the weather changes and it starts snowing during operations, crews must go back to the arterial and collector streets (priority 1 and 2) to start clearing them again. This means crews start working the plan from the beginning.

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**19. What is the liquid running out of the tanks on the back of the snowplows?
What are the white streaks or lines on the roadway? What type of chemical is it?**

The City is using Salt Brine on the roadways which consists of clear water and a mix of 24% sodium chloride (roads salt) Before a snow or ice storm event, City crews will pre-treat the priority one streets, bridges and inclines with salt brine. This can be done up to two days prior to a winter storm. The use of salt brine greatly reduces the bonding or packing of snow and ice to the road surface, making it easier for removal and aiding in a more cost effective snow removal operations.