

**TOWN OF ORROCK**  
**SNOW and ICE CONTROL POLICY**  
**Revision Date: May 24, 2023**

**PURPOSE**

Snow and ice control operations are expensive and involve the use of limited resources. Therefore, when considering snow and ice control activities for Orrock Township, the Board must consider and balance many factors. Factors to be considered include, but are not limited to public safety, the cost-effective allocation of resources, maintaining an efficient transportation system, facilitating the delivery of emergency services, protecting the environment and minimizing the damage to real and personal property.

**POLICY**

**I. TOWN ROADS WHICH ARE SNOWPLOWED**

Unless closed due to a snow emergency, or unless subsequently identified as closed during winter months or when such roads are reasonably impassable, all Town Roads will normally be plowed by the Town or its assigns.

**II. TOWN ROAD SNOWPLOWING PRIORITIES**

Contractor(s) hired by the Town shall have the authority to determine the order in which the Town Roads will be plowed. Efficiency, effectiveness and preservation of the Town's limited resources will be considered when determining the order in which Town Roads are plowed.

**III. EMERGENCY RESPONSE VEHICLE ASSISTANCE**

Reasonable efforts will be made to accommodate requests for snow removal and ice control treatment assistance, by emergency service agencies.

**IV. SNOW REMOVAL COMMENCEMENT**

Operations will *normally* begin when a total accumulation of two inches or more AND snow has stopped falling. Under certain circumstances, the Town Road Authority may dispatch equipment when these criteria are not met. Criteria used by the Contractor and Road Authority to determine snow removal and ice control operations:

- Evaluation of immediate and forecasted weather conditions.
- Effectiveness of operations.
- Safety of employees/personnel.
- Potential unreasonable risk of damage to equipment.
- Timing of snowfall in relation to heavy road use.
- Snow accumulation of two inches or more.

**V. DELAY OR SUSPENSION OF SNOW REMOVAL**

Snow removal and ice control operations will be suspended or delayed when the safety of equipment operators endangered and/or pose unreasonable risk of damage to equipment. Operations may be suspended if weather conditions deteriorate to the point where it is unsafe to continue. Factors used to determine the delay and/or suspension of operations include, but are not limited to severe cold, sustained high wind speeds, limited visibility, accumulation of ice or rapid accumulation of snow. Operations may also end when current or forecasted conditions indicate continuing will be ineffective.

**VI. MANNER IN WHICH SNOW WILL BE PLOWED**

Snow will be plowed in a manner which is the most efficient, effective, and is least costly to the Town. The Contractor will plow in a manner to minimize traffic obstructions. Snow will normally be discharged to the side of the road. In the event of a large accumulation of snow, a single pass on a road may be made to allow for safe travel. The Contractor will return to clear the roadway when snow has stopped falling.

In the event of equipment failure, extreme snow accumulation or other unanticipated events, deviation from these standards may occur.

Snow will be plowed as close to mailboxes located in the road right of way, as practical. Homeowners are responsible to clear snow from and around their mailboxes to ensure mail delivery.

Snowplowing unavoidably results in snow being deposited on driveways and approaches. It is the responsibility of residents to remove snow from their driveways and approaches. It is unlawful for private snowplows to move snow across, or deposit snow on, public roadways. Obstruction of public roadways (including ditches) from those allowed by law (includes snowmobiles and ATVs) to navigate them is also unlawful. Minnesota Statute § 160.2715 and 169.42. Snow deposited on Township roadways, shall be removed within 24 hours of placement or within 3 hours' notice to do so by the Town Board or its designee, whichever is earlier. If a resident fails to comply, the Town may remove the obstruction itself. Costs incurred by the Township to clean up the roadway may be assessed to the offending property owner pursuant to Minnesota Statutes §429.101.

#### **VII. DE-ICING PRODUCTS**

The Town must consider cost, environmental impact, public safety and availability of staff & equipment when determining the application of de-icing products.

State legislation imposes 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, of 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.” Minnesota Statute §160.215.

To the extent de-icing products are applied, priority will be given to the following areas in the order listed:

- 1) Hills, controlled intersections, bridges and curves.
- 2) Major arterial and collector streets.
- 3) Bus routes.
- 4) Residential areas.
- 5) Rural areas.

#### **VIII. SNOW STORAGE**

Collecting, hauling and storing snow is expensive, requires special equipment, is labor intensive and interferes with traffic while being performed. Therefore, snow will only be hauled and stored in other areas than the road right of way when it is necessary to keep a road passable. If snow is hauled it will only be stored on public land or on private property with the express written permission of the landowner(s). To the extent possible, when snow containing salt is hauled and stored, it will be stored away from public waters.

#### **IX. SNOWPLOWING OF PRIVATE PROPERTY**

The Town will not provide snowplowing or ice control for private property EXCEPT when requested to do so by law enforcement or emergency agencies, to provide access during an emergency event. If private property is used with the written permission of the landowner, for the purposes to turn equipment

around or store snow, the Town may snowplow the private property as needed to accommodate the Town's use of the property/land or in accordance with any current snow plowing agreements.

#### **X. OBJECTS WITHIN THE TOWN ROAD RIGHT-OF-WAY**

Town road right-of-ways are governed under the authority of the Town and for the benefit of the public. The Town's priority is to keep the roadways reasonably clear of snow and ice. The Town hires independent contractors to ensure the roads are maintained properly. The Town also holds landowners & residents responsible to keep their private property out of the way of snow and ice removal equipment.

Neither the Township nor its Contractor(s) shall be responsible for damage to resident installed/planted obstructions located within the road right-of-way. A good rule-of-thumb is that the Township owns, or has interest in, at least twelve feet off the edge of the tar, including cul-de-sacs. Obstructions include, but are not limited to; retaining structures, rip rap, posts, irrigation, trees, shrubs and other such landscaping items. Obstructions shall be removed by the property owner within 24 hours of placement or within 3 hours' notice to do so by the Town Board or its designee, whichever is earlier. If a resident fails to comply, the Town may remove the obstruction itself. Costs incurred by the Township to clean up the roadway may be assessed to the offending property owner pursuant to Minnesota Statutes §429.101.

Mailboxes and support posts may be located within the Township right-of-way.

Neither Orrock Township nor its contractors, officers, or agents are liable for damage to a mailbox not installed with a swing-away mailbox support meeting the requirements of the Orrock Township mailbox policy. If a mailbox that is installed with a swing-away mailbox support consistent with the Orrock Township mailbox policy is damaged during township maintenance activities, it will be repaired or replaced as needed at the township's expense. Contact the town clerk in the event of any such damage. (Orrock Township Mailbox Policy)

Vehicles shall NOT be parked in or on the roadway during winter months – November 1<sup>st</sup> through May 1<sup>st</sup>. (Town Winter Parking Ordinance: **O- 20141219**)

Garbage cans shall be placed behind the "plow line" - in or around your driveway, not on the roadway.

#### **XI. COMPLAINTS AND REQUESTS FOR FURTHER SERVICES**

The Town is responsible for approximately forty-seven (47) miles of roadways. Residents shall NOT attempt to stop equipment operators, approach snow removal equipment or impede snow removal in any manner. Stopping plows to discuss your concerns is counter-productive to getting the 47 miles of Town roads cleared, a safety hazard to you, the plow operator and the traveling public.

Concerns about the manner in which the road is being plowed, the use of ice control products or other comments are to be directed to the Town's Road Authority. The current Road Authority is listed on the Contacts page of our website. [www.orrrocktownship.com/contacts](http://www.orrrocktownship.com/contacts).

#### **XII. POLICY REVIEW**

The Board may periodically review and amend this policy, taking into consideration updates to Town, County or State ordinances, resolutions, statutes or policies, as well as changed conditions, new circumstances, constructive criticisms and experiences from snow and ice control operations.

Approved and adopted, by the Orrock Town Board, this 24th Day of May, 2023

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Bryan Adams, Chair

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_  
Chris Weber, Clerk