



City Emergency Winter Operations SOP

Ice Storm / Snow Event Response

1. PURPOSE

This Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) establishes a coordinated response plan for ice storms, snow events, and extreme winter weather affecting the City. The goal is to protect life, property, and critical infrastructure, while ensuring the safety of city employees and effective communication with the public.

2. SCOPE

This SOP applies to:

- Mayor and City Administration
- Public Works Department including Water, Sewer, & Natural Gas
- Police Department
- Fire Department
- Other Utility Operations
- Emergency Coordination Staff

3. OBJECTIVES

- Maintain continuity of government operations
- Protect public safety
- Preserve utility services
- Provide warming shelter options when needed
- Support regional and neighboring jurisdictions
- Ensure clear command, communication, and documentation

4. AUTHORITY

This SOP is activated under the authority of the Mayor or designee during forecasted or active winter weather events.

5. ACTIVATION LEVELS

Level 1 – Monitoring

- Winter weather forecasted
- Department heads notified
- Preparation activities begin
- Department Head & Board Virtual or In Person Meeting

Level 2 – Partial Activation

- Ice/snow imminent or occurring
- Equipment staged
- Incident Command Posts identified
- Public messaging initiated

Level 3 – Full Activation

- Widespread outages or hazards
- Incident Command active
- Warming shelters opened as needed
- Mutual aid and regional coordination initiated

6. INCIDENT COMMAND & COORDINATION

6.1 Incident Command Structure

- Incident Commander: Mayor or Vice Mayor
- Operations Lead: City Director
- Law Enforcement Lead: Chief of Police
- Fire/EMS Lead: Fire Chief
- Utilities Lead: Utility Director

6.2 Incident Command Posts (ICPs)

To ensure continuity during power failures or access issues, multiple ICPs shall be pre-designated across the city.

Primary ICP

- Belmont City Hall at 94 Main Street

Secondary ICP

- Belmont Fire Station at 392 Second Street

Tertiary ICP

- Belmont Public Works Department at 5 Sun Air Drive

Each ICP should have:

- Radio communications
- Backup power or generator access
- Vehicle access during adverse conditions
- Space for coordination and briefings

7. COMMUNICATIONS

- Mayor and City Director shall maintain radio communications with first responders
- Radios tested prior to storm onset
- Backup communication plans established if phone/internet fails
- Regular situation reports (SITREPs) issued internally

8. PRE-STORM PREPARATION

8.1 Generators

- Test and load-test generators
- Fuel to full capacity
- Stage extra fuel
- Inspect oil, coolant, cords, and transfer switches

Critical Facilities

- Water Plant
- Wastewater Facilities
- Natural Gas Facilities
- Police Department
- Fire Department
- Warming Shelter Locations

8.2 Vehicles & Equipment

- Fuel all vehicles and equipment
- Inspect tires, lights, wipers, and defrosters

- Install plows/blades on applicable equipment
- Install salt spreaders and load salt
- Stage equipment at multiple locations

8.3 Chainsaws & Debris Removal

- Fuel and sharpen all chainsaws
- Inspect safety gear (helmets, chaps, gloves)
- Assign chainsaw crews and backups
- Stage saws strategically across city

9. UTILITY OPERATIONS

9.1 Natural Gas

- Remove moisture from lines
- Increase system pressure as appropriate
- Inspect regulators and valves
- Maintain emergency shutoff readiness

9.2 Water & Sewer

- Insulate exposed components
- Confirm generator readiness
- Identify critical lift stations
- Prepare boil water advisory templates

10. ROADWAY OPERATIONS

- Prioritize emergency routes and critical access points
- Coordinate with MDOT for state-maintained highways
- Salt limited to priority roadways
- Plowing only when conditions are safe and will not cause damage

11. WARMING SHELTERS

11.1 Activation Criteria

- Extended power outages
- Loss of heat or water
- Medical equipment requiring electricity

11.2 Warming Shelter Locations

- Blue Springs Lodge at 1 Summers Street
- Belmont Schools Gym at 9 School Drive
- Calvary Baptist Church at 559 Green Street
- Belmont City Hall at 94 Main Street

Shelters should include:

- Heat and electricity
- Restroom access
- Cots/chairs/couches
- Basic supplies
- ADA accessibility where feasible

12. PUBLIC INFORMATION

- Regular updates via social media and official channels
- Clear messaging on travel advisories
- Warming shelter information
- Emergency contact numbers
- Emphasis on safety and patience

13. EMPLOYEE SAFETY & SUPPORT

- Employee safety takes priority over speed of response
- Make sure employees homes & families are taken care of
- Rotate shifts to prevent fatigue
- Provide meals/snacks during extended operations

14. MUTUAL AID & REGIONAL SUPPORT

- Coordinate with county, utilities, and neighboring cities
- Provide assistance when resources allow
- Document aid provided and received

15. DEMOBILIZATION

- Gradual return to normal operations
- Stand down ICPs as conditions improve
- Account for equipment and fuel usage
- Begin damage assessments

16. AFTER-ACTION REVIEW

- Conduct internal review within 30 days
- Document lessons learned
- Update SOP and checklist accordingly

17. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- Life safety first
- Employee safety always
- Utilities before convenience
- Overprepare when possible
- Clear, calm communication