

## SNOW REMOVAL POLICY

### WASHINGTON TOWNSHIP DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

The Washington Township Department of Public Works (DPW), better known as the Road Department has developed a SNOW REMOVAL POLICY in order to allow the residents of Washington Township a better understanding of snow removal operations and procedures.

An informed public will ultimately reduce complaints and problems for Township staff and the residents of Washington Township. The goal of the DPW is to efficiently and safely remove snow and ice from the roadways to bare road surface. The Township reserves the right to deviate from this policy at any time due to weather conditions, manpower shortage, material shortage, equipment failure, CDL restrictions, or any other unforeseen problem.

The DPW consists of four part-time/ full-time employees. These employees are class B CDL licensed operators and are subjected to random drug and alcohol testing and, by law are only permitted to drive 10 hrs. at a time without an 8-hour break unless the board of Supervisors declare an emergency. Multiple snowstorms can cause problems with the CDL restrictions on driving hours. An emergency can be declared in order to allow the employees additional driving hours, however the bare road surface cannot be expected in some of these cases. Making the roads passable maybe the goal instead. The township operates 4 trucks, 3 Freightliners with 11 ft plows and cinder spreaders and 2 Dodge 55000 dump trucks with 9 ft plows and cinder spreaders.

There are approximately 31 miles of Township maintained roads, which when plowing equal 62 lane miles and approximately 19 miles of State. It is important to note that Washington Township DPW does not do snow removal on State maintained roads. There are agreements that can be made with the State DOT allowing Washington Township to do winter maintenance on State roads, however at the present time no such agreements exist mainly due to small size of the Township's work force.

Roads that are State maintained are as follows. Route 87, Route 6, Bartron Road, Stoney Mountain Rd, Keiserville Road, Meshopany Ridge Road, Meshoppen Creek Road, and Ellsworth Hill Road. Any problems or complaints concerning these roads should be taken up with PENN DOT.

DPW Employees are "called out" by the Road Master (s) of the Township. The Road Master is notified of poor winter weather conditions by a variety of means. The Borough Police, the 911 center, State Police, all the way down to periodically getting up and looking out the window. Once a call is made it generally takes 20-45 minutes before the winter maintenance operation begins. Each driver has to do a "walk around" check of the vehicle before loading the material. Depending on the timing of the storm, application of anti-skid and salt usually takes 3 hours, plowing takes nearly 7 hours. Salt is stored under roof with a capacity of nearly 40 tons. Anti-skid is stored under roof also with a capacity of 400 tons. We also constructed a fabric Cinder shed Anti-skid is also stored outside and under our fabric cinder shed. A typical year the DPW uses 1000 tons of anti-skid and 600 tons of salt. A typical "callout" DWP uses about 20 tons of salt and 30 tons of anti-skid. Material has to be ordered and trucked in throughout the winter.

The first operation during a snow event of any magnitude is to get salt and anti-skid down

on the roads to keep the snow from adhering to the road surface. Most times this is all that has to be done. Salt can melt off two inches of snow depending on the conditions. Temperatures above 20 degrees and traffic help salt work. Temps below 20 degrees, salt loses effectiveness without the help of calcium chloride or magnesium chloride. At the present time the DPW is not equipped to use either one of these salt additives. A snow event where multiple inches is forecast applying salt and anti-skid is still the first part of the operation. After this material has been laid, snow plowing begins. Plowing usually takes place when there are snows of 2 or more inches. Material can still be put down during the plowing process and most of the time it is. Certain persistent storms that require the routes to be plowed several times anti-skid and salt are not put down again until the end of the storm is near. This is done primarily to save material and not to waste it. The anti-skid the DPW uses is a red cinders / Black cinders mixed 3 to 1 with salt. This material is used on the arterial roads and the collector roads. Each driver has a route they follow and they stay with the same route so they can become accustomed to problem areas such as hills and bends. These routes have been well thought out and take 3 concerns into consideration. First, high traffic roads with hills, getting to these roads right away is important for obvious reasons. Traffic can quickly pack down the snow making it glaze over and extremely slippery. With steep hills in the mix multiple accidents are possible and an impassible road is probable. Second consideration is to school bus routes. This is important because it is extremely important to insure the safety of the children. Buses make a lot of stops picking up and dropping off of children. The faster we can get material on the roads the quicker they become safer. Third, the rest of the roads.

If anyone is running behind another driver can help out. Best case is that all the drivers get there about the same time and this area is quickly dealt with. Routes do change a little when plowing is all that is being done. After a storm that has produced a significant amount of snow the road grader is used to widen out the main roads. A backhoe is also used to remove the snow where visibility is a problem, especially intersections. All vehicles are cleaned and checked after each and every snow event. Equipment failures are common in the winter due to the severe conditions the equipment is exposed to. Plow blades wear out and have to be replaced periodically, spreader augers wear out hoses burst, lights burn out, and all are problems that have to be dealt with during the winter. Finally, the role the resident plays in snow removal. Snowstorms are stressful. Please limit trips during snow events.

**Vehicles** are not permitted on the cart way; it is a motor code violation. The Police will be notified.

***Vehicles are not permitted to park along the roadway in the developments.***

***ALL VEHICLES must be parked in the driveways!***

With all the liability concerns anymore, we are better off pushing the vehicle off the road with our trucks than to plow around it. A motorist not familiar with the road in a "white out" condition could run into the back of a vehicle parked on the road critically injuring themselves or someone else. A fire truck on the way to a house fire could swerve around a parked vehicle and get stuck off the road on the other side hampering fire-fighting efforts. Shoveling snow out on to the road is another violation. This snow can freeze and cause a driver to lose control of their vehicle. A neighbor could be walking their dog in their lot plan when someone again unfamiliar with roads hits a patch of ice caused by someone shoveling snow on the road. Another situation we can't allow. Although these incidents may sound far-fetched, they can happen and they have happened. Washington Township has to protect itself from these potential liability issues. Please note that there is no other place to plow snow other than off to the side of the road. We can't afford to take the time to clean driveways or do anything special. Please do not shovel snow onto the roadway. If you have to clean your driveway before the trucks go by clean an

area after the driveway to allow the bulk on the snow to discharge there instead of the driveway. When a storm occurs during the week around rush hour traffic becomes one of those uncontrollable problems, slowing down our operation significantly.

**Mail boxes**, we do not try to hit mailboxes, on occasion we have. Most mailboxes are knocked down from the snow as it comes off the plow. Make sure your mailbox post is strong and able to with stand snow hitting it. Check the box; make sure it is firmly attached to the post. Mailboxes are considered a structure on the right of way. A sound post and securely attached box will not be knocked over by snow coming off the plow. All drivers are instructed to drive as slow as realistically possible during wet snows in order to minimize the problems with mailboxes. If a driver physically hits a mailbox with the truck, they are instructed to report it and the Township. Mailboxes knocked down because of snow are the responsibility of the resident.

Many problems occur during snow removal. Washington Township DPW is committed to providing the best service as possible. As mentioned, a lot of problems are uncontrollable, traffic, duration of the storm, amount of snow, equipment failures, and fatigue all hinders the process. Please be patient and help us help you.