

CLEARWATER COUNTY HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

SNOWPLOWING POLICY

Revised November 2015

It is the policy of the Clearwater County Highway Department to clear/open all County roads within 48 hours of a snow event. Clearwater County recognizes the risk inherent in plowing snow-covered roadways, and we will not allow snowplowing equipment to operate under poor visibility or severe blowing snow conditions. The General Foreman shall determine the suitability of the weather conditions and call out the plowing equipment as weather conditions permit.

Clearwater County does not have a bare road policy and does not assure a completely bare road. Entire sections of roadway are not usually salted. Users of the road system are reminded to exercise caution and drive with care. The legal speed limit may not be possible at all times.

Dispatching of Snow Plows

The decision to plow and/or sand will be made by the Highway Engineer and/or Maintenance Foreman, based on the following guidelines:

1. The County will not dispatch plows until after the snowfall and/or wind has stopped, EXCEPT: (a) in an emergency or other special circumstances; or (b) when conditions allow reasonable accomplishments to be made.
2. The County will perform snow removal on bituminous surfaced roads when we receive appreciable accumulations, generally 1 to 2 inches. 1" of wet heavy snow or 2" light snow will be used as a general rule of thumb.
3. The County will perform snow removal on gravel roads when accumulations exceed two to four (2 - 4) inches. Gravel roads will not be plowed in early season until snow pack has been formed.
4. The County will perform ice control measures when icy conditions seriously affect travel.

Hours of Operation

The County is staffed for one shift of snow and ice removal. In a snow event, the necessary County personnel and equipment will be mobilized by the General Foreman.

The normal weekday early start time during a snow event is 5:00 a.m. Weekends and holidays will receive a reduced level of service, due to lower traffic volumes and limited resources available.

Operator duty shifts are generally limited to a maximum of 12 hours per day for safety reasons; therefore most routes will not have coverage between 5:00 p.m. and 5:00 a.m. the next morning.

Operations

Generally, the following three phases will be used in snow removal operations:

1. Make the roads passable: Clean one lane in each direction.
2. Widen the lanes to edge of shoulders and apply abrasive/chemical mixture: The County will perform sanding operations at problem areas, including: curves, hills, intersections, and bridges. **The County does not assure a completely bare road and will not typically sand entire sections of highways.**

A blend of 8-10% salt to sand is generally used in sanding operations; this is modified as the temperature and/or conditions warrant. Salt use will be limited at temperatures below +20 degrees; below +20 degrees salt becomes ineffective.

Gravel roads shall not be plowed to a bare surface or sanded unless directed by the General Foreman.

3. Clean up: Remove ice and slush off roadway after salt and sun have been allowed to work.

Depending upon the situation, more than one phase may be accomplished at one time.

Storm Conditions and Start Time

The criteria for the level of service to be provided shall be based on the type of winter storm event. If a "Winter Storm Warning" is issued or snowfall is expected to exceed 4 inches this would be a Type A condition. Type B condition is all other snow events where accumulation of snow on the roadways is evident and the wind or traffic does not clear the snow. Type C condition is for light snow or blowing snow generally less than 1.0 inches of accumulation, or a freezing rain or other icing condition.

Following is the level of service to be provided based on the type of winter storm event.

Type A Storm Conditions

Type A Storm Condition is when a "Winter Storm Warning" is issued or snowfall is expected to exceed 4 inches.

Under these conditions all snowplowing equipment will be dispatched as soon as practical to open roads in a priority order. The start time shall be determined by the General Foreman and generally will be 5:00 AM or as weather conditions permit.

Type B Storm Conditions

Type B Storm Condition is less than 4 inches of snow and when snow accumulation on roadway is evident and the wind and traffic does not clear the snow.

Under these conditions all snowplowing equipment will be dispatched as soon as practical to open Class 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 roads. Sanding and ice scraping will be conducted as necessary to clear Class 1 and 2 roads. As time permits, during daylight hours, Class 6 and 7 roads will be cleared. The start time shall be determined by the General Foreman and generally will be 5:00 AM or as weather conditions permit.

Type C Storm Conditions

Type C Storm Condition is for light snow or blowing snow generally less than 1.0 inches of accumulation on roads, or a freezing rain or other icing conditions.

Under these conditions all snowplowing equipment will be dispatched as necessary to complete sanding and ice scraping work on Class 1 and 2 roads. The start time shall be determined by the General Foreman and generally will be 8:00 AM or as weather conditions permit.

Road Classification

The priority for snowplowing will be established by the County Engineer, and based upon the measured traffic volumes for each road in a given classification.

Class 1 & 2 Roads: Shall be plowed or sanded as appropriate for any snow or ice condition that accumulates on the road surface. When laying out a route, the operator shall make every effort to accomplish snowplowing on the highest rating class route first, (i.e., Class 1.). Plowing shall generally be started at 5:00 AM, depending upon weather conditions.
(Bituminous Roads)

Class 3 & 4 Roads: Shall be plowed after Class 1 and 2 roads are opened, depending upon weather conditions.
(Gravel CSAH or CAR roads)

Class 5 Roads: Shall not be plowed on Saturdays, Sundays, or Holidays unless directed by the General Foreman. Shall be plowed after Class 3 and 4 roads are opened under heavy snowfall conditions (generally 5-inches or more). Under lighter snowfall conditions Class 5 roads may be plowed at the same time of Class 3 and 4 roads, if it saves backtracking time. However, an emphasis shall be made to plow most of the Class 3 and 4 roads first.
(Gravel Township)

Class 6 & 7 Roads: Shall be plowed after all other road Classes are plowed and only during daylight hours. Shall not be plowed on Saturdays, Sundays, or Holidays unless directed by the General Foreman.
(Dumpster Sites and Driveways)

The following sanding policy shall be implemented unless directed otherwise by the General Foreman:

Sanding of road shall be implemented when weather conditions are zero degrees Fahrenheit and rising with no snow predicted.

Class 1 Roads: Sand on hills, curves, intersections, and spot sand periodically along the roadway centerline dependent on weather conditions.

Class 2 Roads: Sand on hills, curves, and intersections.
Sand periodically along roadway centerline if road remains extremely slippery after several days and dependent on weather conditions.

Class 3 –7 Roads: No sanding unless directed by the General Foreman to address specific icing problems on hills, curves, or intersections.

Mailboxes actually struck by the plowing equipment shall be repaired or replaced

The operator shall immediately report the incident by radio. Damage done by flying snow or ice shall be the responsibility of the mailbox owner. Upon a damage reported by an operator, the General Foreman shall determine the condition of the mailbox at the earliest possible convenience. If possible, a determination of cause should be made and the office so informed. The mailbox should be repaired or replaced by the next business day after completion of the snowplowing operation and dependent on weather conditions.

Plowing Driveways and Township Roads

Operators are expected to maintain accurate records for billing procedures to townships, other County departments, and private individuals. **Private property shall not be plowed unless a snow emergency has been declared by the Chair of the County Board.** Operators shall not plow private driveways unless first approved by the office. Class 6 and 7 roads will be completed after the driving lanes of all County and Township roads are cleared.

Residential Plowing

County residents are reminded that it is unlawful under Minnesota Statutes 160.2715 to plow snow from driveways onto or across County roads. Piles of snow left on or near the road can freeze into a solid mass or cause drifting, creating a hazardous situation for vehicles and snowplows.

Stranded Motorists

Plow operators may assist stranded motorists by contacting local law enforcement and/or emergency personnel. Plow operators will not attempt to remove a stuck vehicle.

Emergencies

Plows will not be dispatched from regular routes or called in for extra duty unless it is an emergency coordinated through the Sheriff's Office. Slippery roads or snow drifting on roads are expected aspects of winter travel and generally is not adequate justification to dispatch plow crews.

No Travel Advisory


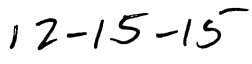
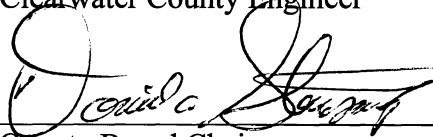
No Travel Advisories issued by the State Patrol and/or Sheriff's Office apply to all County snow and ice removal crews. When a No Travel Advisory is issued, local media is contacted and all plows are pulled from their respective routes.

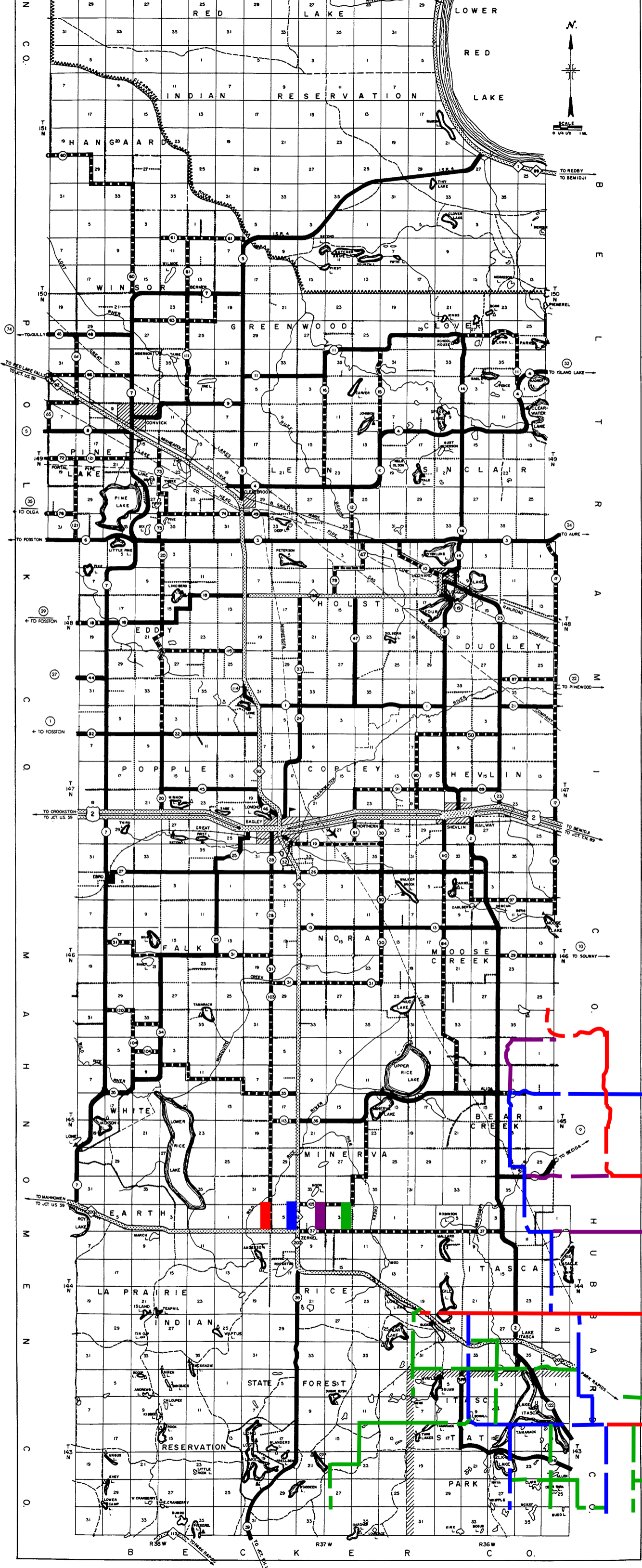
Information

Questions or concerns regarding snow removal should be directed to the Clearwater County Highway Department at (218) 694-6132 during normal business hours (M-F, 7:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.).

Summary

This policy was developed to provide general guidelines for both County personnel and the traveling public. This policy intends to cover the majority of situations normally encountered in winter storm events. If situations arise that is not part of the above policy, the County Highway Engineer or Maintenance Supervisor will deal with them on a case-by-case basis. Each decision to mobilize the snow plow crews is a judgement call based on the particular weather conditions combined with past experience along with the resources available at the time and, therefore, may not adhere strictly to this general policy.

	
_____ Dan Sauvé, P.E. Clearwater County Engineer	_____ Date
	
_____ County Board Chair Dan Stenseng	_____ Date



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COPLEY
SHEVLIN
FALK
NORA
MOOSE CREEK
WHITE
RICE
MINERVA
BEAR CREEK
EARTH
LA PRAIRIE
INDIAN RESERVATION
STATE FOREST
ITASCA
PARK

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TO REDDY TO BEMIDJI
TO GULLY
TO RED LAKE FALLS TO CT. US 59
TO ISLAND LAKE
TO AURE
TO PINWOOD
TO BEMIDJI TO JCT. I.R. 87
TO SOLWAY
TO MEDIA
TO MAHNDEN TO JCT. US 59
TO BARK PARKS

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