

Town of Wellesley Department of Public Works

Winter Weather Information

Getting ready for winter

Throughout the year the Town of Wellesley Department of Public Works (DPW) trims trees and bushes, repairs sidewalks and clears catch basins in anticipation of winter plowing and melting snow. Residents should also prepare for winter by trimming bushes back from the sidewalk and removing any obstacles along the roadside in front of their property. This will allow the street and sidewalk plows to operate safely, and reduce damage to landscape plantings.

When a snow storm is forecasted

When the National Weather Service forecasts a snow storm for our area, the DPW swings into action to prepare for clearing the town's roadways.

The Department of Public Works is responsible for keeping over 110 miles of Town roads and 49 miles of sidewalks (on school walking routes and designated commercial areas) passable and safe for travel. Routes 9 and 135 (Central Street from Weston Road to the Natick town line) are maintained by the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT). If you have any concerns about State roads, contact MassDOT (District #6) at 617-951-6200.

Wellesley DPW snow removal crews are prepared to work 24 hours a day, 7 days a week throughout the winter. In a snowstorm our highest priority is to provide safe passage for emergency vehicles.

The crews first respond to a storm with surface treatments (i.e. salt and calcium chloride). This continues until the streets are safe for passage of all vehicles, or until the snow and ice accumulation exceeds three inches, at which point these treatments become ineffective.

Typically the crews begin plowing at three inches of snow. Equipment is assigned to over twenty-six plow routes which are supervised by four foremen. Plowing continues until all streets are clear and passable, which is long AFTER the snow stops falling.

After it stops snowing, the DPW continues to clear and widen the streets to enable safe travel starting with the arterial roads, then feeder streets and finally dead-end or cul-de-sac streets. Once the roads have been cleared, surface treatment begins again to try to establish bare pavement on the main arteries, commuter routes and other designated streets. Not all streets in Town are salted.

If you have any questions or concerns for the Park and Highway Division, please call 781-235-7600, ext. 3325 Monday-Friday, 7 am to 3 pm. If you have an emergency after regular business hours, please call 781-235-7600, ext. 3322.

When the Flakes Start Flying:

Tips for Residents

- We remind all motorists that Town bylaws prohibit overnight street parking and overnight parking in Municipal parking lots. Arrange with neighbors to make use of driveways that are not being utilized. If you must park in the roadway during the day, neighborhoods can help by parking all vehicles on the same side of the street. This gives the plow more room to work.
- Remember to pull vehicles all the way into your driveways and please do not park your vehicle in the public way portion of the driveway. Vehicles should be at least eight feet in from the edge of roadway or past the inside edge of the sidewalk. Protruding vehicles are at risk for damages and can impede snow removal. The DPW will have illegally parked vehicles that interfere with our snow plowing operations towed at the owner's expense.
- Remove all obstacles from the roadway and tree lawn (grassy area along the roadway/sidewalk) in front of your home. This includes all sports equipment (i.e. hockey/soccer nets, basketball hoops, and skateboard ramps and rails). Removing these items will help protect the safety of the snowplow operator and will help eliminate damage to your property.
- To help protect your lawn and better guide street and sidewalk plow operators you may want to place reflective snow stakes along the edges of your landscape.
- When plowing or snow blowing your driveway, do not move the snow into or across the road or into the sidewalk or across the street from the mouth of your driveway. It is against Town bylaws to do so—it creates hazardous conditions for drivers and walkers and increases the cost of snow plowing. Remember, if you hire a private contractor for snow removal; make sure he or she is aware of the Town bylaws. This violation of Town bylaws could bring the property owner a fine up to \$50 per offense. Similarly, remind your contractor not to plow snow onto fire hydrants in your neighborhood.
- It is not uncommon to see a salting truck or snowplow go by your house many times during a storm, particularly on routes that lead to outlying areas. The storm will dictate how many times we sand or plow a street.
- When a snow storm strikes, avoid driving. If you must drive, fill your gas tank and stock your vehicles with blankets, a shovel, flashlight and batteries, a windshield scraper and snacks. Let someone know your travel plans and estimated time of arrival.
- Remember when driving during a storm, do not pass a plow or sander, and maintain a safe distance -- stay at least two car lengths behind a snow plow for every 10 mph you are traveling. *Never* cut in between a caravan of plows clearing the highway.
- **Caution – Children should NOT play in snow piled near roadways!** For safety's sake, we ask your cooperation in keeping your children from sledding in the street or playing on mounds of snow created by the plows until the plows have completed their job and left the scene. The big plows make it difficult for our employees to see small children darting back and forth along the roadway.

- If possible, after the storm, please shovel the fire hydrant near your home as well as any storm drain grates. If rain follows the snow, street flooding and icing can quickly become a problem.
- To ensure regular mail delivery by the U.S. Postal Service, clear snow around the mailbox. Mailboxes placed in the right-of-way are placed at the owner's risk. Each mailbox installation should be sufficiently solid to withstand snow-clearing efforts. The Town is not responsible for removal of snow around a mailbox.
- A winter sand/salt mix is available for residents free of charge at the RDF. Bring your own containers and a shovel.

Home Safety

- If possible, wait until the street plowing is completed before shoveling the end of your driveway. Most roads are pushed back three or four times before the plow trucks have completed their routes. The end of precipitation does not mean the plowing has been completed.
- If the weather is calling for snow turning to freezing rain, try to wait and shovel your driveway after the freezing rain stops. This can help prevent your driveway from icing.
- Stock up on ice melt before the storm. Use ice melter with calcium chloride (CaCl₂). It's better for the environment and only a small amount is required to melt ice. Potassium chloride (KCl) is okay, too. Avoid rock salt (NaCl or sodium chloride); it kills plants and trees.
- Avoid sand. It doesn't help pedestrians; it makes hard ice more slippery. It also gets into storm drains and catch basins, and is expensive to clean up in the spring.
- Use ice melter on your driveway entrance and sidewalks early and often to prevent snow from packing down and forming into ice.
- Check home smoke detectors, CO detectors and fire extinguishers.
- Check that any exhaust pipes for heating equipment are free and clear of snow throughout a storm. Drifting snow can easily obstruct exhaust vents.
- Always have enough home heating fuel.
- Be aware that snow shoveling is a strenuous activity made worse by extremely cold temperatures. Older residents and those in ill health should not shovel. Prior to a snow storm, make arrangements with someone to shovel for you.

Winter Weather Terms

- WINTER STORM WATCH – Severe winter weather may affect our area.
- WINTER STORM WARNING- Severe weather conditions snow are definitely on the way.

- BLIZZARD WARNING – Large amount of falling of blowing snow and winds of at least 35 miles per hour are expected to last for several hours.
- WIND CHILL - Wind chills of minus 30 degrees Fahrenheit or lower will cause frostbite on exposed skin in as little as 15 minutes.
- FROSTBITE – Symptoms include a loss of feeling and a white or pale appearance. Fingers, toes, nose and ear lobes are most quickly affected
- HYPOTHERMIA – Symptoms include uncontrollable shivering, slow speech, memory lapses, frequent stumbling and drowsiness. If either frostbite or hypothermia is suspected, slowly warm the victim and seek immediate medical assistance. Never give a frostbite or hypothermia victim a sedative or alcohol.

Remember it's the law – applicable Wellesley Bylaws

49.2. Use of Public Ways and Places. No person shall throw, place or cause to be placed in any public way or public place in the Town, any tree, bush or other planting, or any obstruction, or any garbage, fuel, building material, paper, cards, handbills, leaves, or rubbish of any kind, **nor stones or rocks or other objects to act as curbing**, except in such place and in such manner as shall be directed by the Selectmen and except as hereinafter provided in Section 49.2A [newspaper vending machines].

49.6. Removal of Vehicles. The Director of Public Works, or other officer having charge of ways, **for the purpose of removing or plowing snow, or removing ice, from any way, may remove or cause to be removed to some convenient place**, including a public garage, **any vehicle interfering with such work**. The owner of such vehicle shall be liable for the reasonable cost of such removal and storage charges

49.11. Obstructions on Streets and Sidewalks. No person shall use any portion of any street which the Town is obligated to keep in repair for the purpose of placing building materials or rubbish or moving a building on either the sidewalk or roadway without a permit from the Board of Public Works and approval of the Chief of Police. (*Amended ATM 2002*) No person to whom such a permit is issued shall fail to comply with the conditions thereof. Application for such permit shall be made to the Board of Public Works. The Board of Public Works may by vote grant such permit to be in force for a period they may designate, not exceeding ninety days, upon condition that during the whole of every night, from sunset until sunrise, warning lights shall be so placed as to warn travelers of the presence of the obstruction and upon such further conditions as the Board of Public Works may by vote determine. The Board of Public Works may require that a bond be furnished to secure the performance of the provisions of this section. A copy of said vote certified by the Secretary or Clerk of the Board of Public Works shall forthwith be transmitted to the Chief of Police.

49.5. Ice and Snow on Streets. No person shall plow or shovel, lay, throw or place, or cause to be laid, thrown or placed, (either by one's own action or by the actions of a plowing contractor or other agent) any ice or snow on any street or sidewalk in the Town which has been cleared or plowed for travel. (*Amended ATM 2006*)

49.7. Playing in or Across Public Ways. No person shall throw stones, **snowballs**, sticks, or other missiles, or kick or throw a football, or play at any game in which a ball is used, or fly any kite or balloon, or shoot with or use a bow and arrow, gun, air-gun, or sling, in or across any public way in the Town.

Section 5-6 No All Night Parking. No person shall park any vehicle, except in an emergency, on any street for a period of time longer than one (1) hour between the hours of 2 am and 6 am of any day.