

**Town of Southwick, MA**  
**Snow & Ice Removal Policy**  
**Adopted October 2, 2017**

**Introduction**

The Town of Southwick Department of Public Works (DPW) will provide reasonable snow and ice removal in a safe and cost effective manner, keeping in mind safety, personnel, budget, and environmental concerns. The Town will use Town employees, equipment and/or private contractors to provide this service.

**Snow and Ice Policy**

Procedures: The Director of Public Works or his/her designee, in coordination with the Chief of Police, will decide when to begin snow or ice control operations. The criteria for that decision include:

1. Snow accumulation
2. Drifting snow that causes problems for travel
3. Ice conditions that affect travel

Method of snow removal: Snow will be plowed in a manner so as to minimize traffic obstructions. Snow will be plowed from the road centerline out except where it is windrowed. In times of extreme snowfall, streets will not always immediately be able to be completely cleared of snow.

Town Roads: The Town of Southwick maintains roads including public roads and private roads open to the public and approved for maintenance by the Town. Depending on the duration and intensity of storms, snow removal efforts may take anywhere from three to twenty four hours after the snow stops to complete the process. The clean-up process of widening roads, wing-plowing, clearing catch basins/inlets, and knocking down snow banks at intersections/cul-de-sacs may take up to 1-2 weeks after the storm ends.

DPW spreads treatment on all Town roads (and private ways open to the public and approved by the Town for maintenance by the Town) with a treated salt (deicing salt enhanced with magnesium chloride). DPW plows the primary roads during storms while sub-contractors maintain side streets. Any special requests should be made to the DPW office at 413-569-6772. If acceptable, the Supervisor will relay these requests to the Town crews/contractor. Residents shall not confront the Town employees or contractors with concerns/complaints. All concerns/complaints shall be made via phone at 413-569-6772.

State Roads: College Highway (Route 10/202) is maintained by the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT). Any issues regarding plowing or maintenance of College Highway shall be made directly to MassDOT at 413-582-0599.

On-street Parking: There is no on-street parking allowed during and up to the later of 24 hours after a storm or until snow removal operations are complete. Parking Bans are typically broadcast by the local news media. Owners/operators of vehicles left on the road may be fined and/or towed at their own expense in accordance with the Town Bylaw Chapter 172, Section 6. The owner/operator may also be responsible in the event of an

accident due to the vehicle left in the road and for additional snow removal fees. The Town will not be responsible for vehicle damage if it is left within the Town ROW (Right of Way).

Mailbox Damage: Mailboxes located within the Town ROW limits exist by sufferance only. Prior to the winter season, homeowners should check that the mailbox post is sturdy (no cracks or rot) and that the mailbox is securely attached to the post. Homeowners are encouraged to protect their mailboxes from plowed snow with an "A-frame" or sheet of plywood. While plow drivers are careful to avoid mailboxes, there are times when mailboxes are damaged either by direct contact with the plow or the force of the snow coming off the plows during snow plowing operations. Drivers should report direct hits to their supervisor; however, sometimes mailboxes can be damaged without the driver's knowledge.

Provided the mailbox does not intrude or hang over onto paved portion of road, if a mailbox is damaged, the homeowner shall report this to DPW at 413-569-6772 within 36 hours of the storm to ensure proper investigation by the DPW Director or his/her designee. If it is determined that the mailbox was damaged due to a direct hit by a Town plow, the Town will furnish a replacement with a standard (one size fits all) mailbox and/or post, installation not provided. If it is determined that the damage is caused by snow coming off of the plows during snow plow operations, poor or improper installation (including hanging over or intruding onto paved portion of road), rot, cracks, old age, etc. the Town will not be responsible to provide a replacement mailbox, post, or accessories.

The United States Postal Service (USPS) requires that customers maintain mailboxes in a manner that enables the carrier to deliver and collect mail. The customer is required to keep the approach to the mailbox sufficiently cleared of snow for the postal carrier. This is not the responsibility of the DPW or its sub-contractors. For additional information regarding the installation of residential mailboxes, refer to United States Postal Service mailbox guidelines at the following website: <https://www.usps.com/manage/mailboxes.htm>

Damage to Grassed Areas: While plow drivers are careful to avoid tearing up grassed areas, there are times damage occurs from the snow plow blade. If damage occurs to grassed areas within the right-of-way, the Town will not repair any damage. If damage occurs to grassed areas outside the right-of-way and on private property, repairs will be made by either resetting the torn up grass or seeding in the spring when time permits. Property owners are encouraged to install stakes along the road edge to assist the plow driver follow the road.

Other Property in the Right-of-Way: The Town is not responsible for damage to any other structures or property located within the Town ROW (sprinkler heads, water lines, driveways, basketball hoops, fences, walls, vehicles etc.).

Catch Basin and Storm Inlets: The Town maintains approximately 2,500 catch basins and hundreds of inlets/outlets on a regular basis. It is impossible to monitor them consistently during the winter months. If residents notice local flooding, please report it to the DPW at 413-569-6772.

Sidewalk Clearing: Chapter 157, Section 4 of the Town Bylaw requires owners of property abutting sidewalks to remove ice and snow from sidewalks within 24 hours after the snow ceases to fall and place sand or some other suitable substance on slippery surfaces (usage of salt on the sidewalks shall be minimized as it destroys concrete surfaces). Lack of appropriate snow/ice clean-up and/or sanding could result in a liability issue for the

homeowner should an injury occur on this sidewalk. To report sidewalk clearing violations, please call the Police Department at 413-569-5348.

Parking Lots, Entrances, and Driveways: Responsibility to clear private parking lots, entrances to lots and driveways shall rest with the individual property owners. This includes the clearing of additional snow that may accumulate once the Town plows have passed the property. Snow being put back onto private properties due to clearing to the streets will be the property owner's responsibility to remove or clear.

Driveway Clearing and Clearing Across Roads: No snow shall be plowed, shoveled or snow blown across or onto any local or State roads by property owners. Chapter 157, Section 5 of the Town Bylaw prohibits the plowing or causing to be plowed of snow or ice from private property into or onto a public way. This activity not only violates a Town Bylaw, it creates a safety hazard and can create in unnecessary costs to the taxpayer for the additional snow removal expense. This action could result in a liability issue for the homeowner should an accident be attributed to this activity.

Fire Hydrant Clearing: Any efforts by property owners to aid with keeping each hydrant clear of snow and accessible is greatly appreciated by the DPW. Clearing around the hydrant with a path to the road helps protect the safety of the neighborhood by allowing the Fire Department to find and hook up to the hydrant quickly and efficiently in the event of an emergency.

Winter Sand: Winter sand is available to Town residents only while supplies last. Sand is located at 661 College Highway in a small shed on the north side of the building. Due to the high cost, salt is for DPW use only. Contractors and commercial properties are prohibited from collecting or using this sand. Residents shall keep clear of DPW vehicles and machinery while loading sand onto private vehicles. Residents should take no more sand than they need. The Town reserves the right to limit or discontinue this policy at any time if it feels residents are taking advantage of this supply of sand.

Disclaimer: This Town of Southwick Snow Removal Policy, as well as the Town's snow removal procedures, are for guidance purposes only. The uncertainty of the conditions and durations of a winter storm may make the Town's compliance with this policy and the snow removal operating procedures difficult and/or unworkable. The Town of Southwick will implement best practices when responding to all winter storm situations.