

# ***Resident's Guide To The The Town of Great Barrington's Winter Snow and Ice Operations***

The intent of this guide is to advise the Town of Great Barrington residents of our Highway Department's winter snow plowing and anti-icing/de-icing goals and objectives. We would like to facilitate your understanding and to obtain your assistance so that the roads in Great Barrington can be restored to "passable conditions" as promptly and efficiently as possible after a storm. Your cooperation and understanding are essential for the Department of Public Works to achieve this objective. Please have patience. Each winter storm has unique characteristics that influence the method we use to combat the resulting snow and/or ice related conditions. The timing of a storm can also influence the removal of snow and ice. The Department of Public Works endeavors to maintain adequate traction for pedestrians and vehicles properly equipped for winter driving conditions. This does not mean bare, dry pavement should be expected after each snowfall or ice storm. Furthermore, this does not mean the streets will be free of ice and snow.

Snow plowing is a time consuming and arduous job. The Great Barrington Highway Division plows approximately 100 miles of roads, 30 miles of sidewalks, fire and police departments, and town buildings, parking lots, etc. With your assistance and patience, we will be able to get roads open, keep traffic flowing, and restore roads to safe traveling conditions quickly. Some residents will have their road plowed first and some will be last, but all town roads **will** be cleared. We thank you in advance for your cooperation.

## **Snowplowing Operations**

The following is a general description of the Department of Public Work's snow & ice operations policy. You must also be aware that each storm is different, but we will try to follow our snow & ice operations policy as closely as possible.

Our SNOW & ICE PROGRAM entails three (3) steps:

- 1 Anti-icing operation
- 2 Plowing operation
- 3 De-icing operation

## **Anti-icing Operation**

As the snow storm begins, the DPW initiates its anti-icing operations by spreading salt when necessary, first on the primary and collector roads, hills and school bus routes and last all local roads. This serves two main purposes: it prevents the snow from bonding and compacting to the pavement and it keeps traffic moving. When fully operational, 9 anti-icing/de-icing material spreader trucks are used for this operation.

## **Plowing Operation**

Plowing operations begin when a minimum of three (3) inches of snow accumulates on the ground. The Department of Public Works has 13 vehicles equipped to plow snow. The main objective during the snow storm is to keep roads passable. At the end of the storm, the plows begin to push back the

amassed snow to the edge of the pavement. Residents may want to wait until the roads have been plowed clear before clearing the entrance of their driveways. If snow banks need to be pushed back further because of heavy build-up on the road side, we will attempt to do so following a storm given the availability of manpower and equipment.

No person other than an employee in the service of the public works department or any employee in the service of an independent contractor acting for the public works department shall pile, push, or plow snow or ice onto a Town way so as to impede the flow of traffic on such way.

The Department of Public Works staff are well trained and dedicated to plow "around the clock", if necessary, keeping the roads open and passable. Residents should not be alarmed if they do not see their road plowed during the early part of a snow storm. **The Department of Public Works follows an assigned route plan.** Again, please be patient, all Town-owned roads will eventually be plowed.

## **De-icing Operation**

Once the snowfall has stopped and all roads are clear of snow, post storm de-icing operations commence. All roads are again treated with salt and sand when necessary to improve traction and melt remaining snow and ice. (exception to this policy will only be when material supplies are extremely low and main roads, hills and bus routes become more of a priority than secondary roads).

## **Mail Box Policy**

Another area of concern to residents is mailboxes. We do not "deliberately" knock over or damage mailboxes. Remember, anything installed within the Town's right-of-way (i.e., fence, mailbox, etc.) is placed there at the owner's risk. Hence, residents are encouraged to place mailboxes at the maximum allowable distance from the pavement. Please be aware that the Town of Great Barrington does not reimburse for mailboxes damaged during snow plowing operations. Mailboxes should be inspected regularly to insure that they are secured properly and that wood posts are not rotted out

## **Winter Parking Ban**

Under the Town code, Traffic Rules and Regulations, Chapter 204, Section 24 Overnight Parking is prohibited on all streets from November 15th to April 1<sup>st</sup> from 1:00 AM to 6:00 AM. Violators will be ticketed and in case of a snow plowing and/or snow removal operations vehicles will be towed.

## **Residents Can Help:**

Residents can assist the Department of Public Works during a snow storm by heeding these suggestions:

1. Observe all winter parking bans.
2. Reduce your speed and drive cautiously.
3. Remain off the streets during snow storms unless absolutely necessary.
4. Do not allow children to make "snow forts" at the edge of roads.
5. Do not plow, blow or throw snow back into the road.

6. Before final clean-up of your driveway check the road. If it does not appear to be widened out, a plow will most likely be returning to plow again, and may push snow back into the entrance of your driveway. Doing this might keep you from clearing your driveway more than once.
7. During plowing operations some lawn areas located within the town's right of way will inadvertently be damaged. To help keep this from occurring, we recommend that you maintain reflectors at the edge of your lawn as a guide for our plow operators.

#### **Winter Storm Emergency Phone Numbers**

Emergency	911
Police Department	413-528-0306 x 3
DPW Highway Division	413-528-2500
Department of Public Works	413-528-0867

Please be advised that Route 7 south from National Grid, Route 7 and north from the brown bridge, Routes 7A and 23 and a portion of Route 183 are maintained by the Massachusetts Highway Department and not by the Town of Great Barrington.

#### **Winter Sand**

Winter sand is available for residential use only in three (3) locations in Great Barrington. These locations are:

1. Transfer Station – Located on Route 7 across from Monument Valley High School.
2. Housatonic Community Center – Located at the intersection of Main and Pleasant Streets in Housatonic.
3. Southern Berkshire District Court Parking Lot – Located at 9 Gilmore Avenue in Great Barrington.

#### **Residents are asked to take only one five (5) gallon pail at a time for personal use.**

#### **Frequently Asked Questions**

Why do snowplows block my driveway with snow when they clear the road?

*While plow crews try to minimize the amount of snow that gets plowed in the driveways during the storm, it is the responsibility of the property owner to clear their driveway opening. Also, as long as there is snow in the roads and streets we will continue to plow. To avoid double work try to shovel snow from your driveway after the plow has been by, and shovel to the right side of your driveway as you face the road instead of the left.*

Why doesn't the Town put salt on the roads before it snows?

*Putting salt on the road surfaces prior to a snowfall wastes time and money. Salt is most effective after snow has accumulated and the temperature is 20°F or higher. Under these conditions, the salt and snow will mix, melting snow into slush that can be plowed off the pavement. The melting action will occur typically within two hours, less if traffic is using the highway. If the temperature is below 20 ° salt will have difficulty melting snow and ice. Abrasives (sand) are put down for traction.*

Who determines when the snowplows are called out?

*Under our policy the Highway/Facilities Superintendent or his designee calls in staff for the snow plow operations. During the off hours the Police Department will contact the Superintendent when there is a need to call in the crews.*

Why it that sometimes snowplows are seen driving with their plows in the raised position? Why are they not plowing?

*There are several reasons plows are not always pushing snow. Plows may be in operation to spread materials or may be out of materials to spread and headed back for a refill. Another possibility is that the Town is not responsible for the road the plow is currently on and is headed elsewhere.*

My mailbox was knocked down by the snowplow. Who is responsible for replacing it?

*Any mailbox damaged while located in the Town' right-of-way is the home owner's responsibility.*

The Department of Public Works in Great Barrington is devoted to providing residents with dependable snow and ice operation in the shortest and most efficient time possible. With your cooperation we will all benefit during a snow storm. If you have any questions concerning the snow and ice operations as it is explained, please call (413) 528-0867, (413) 528-2500 or visit our web site at [www.townofgb.org](http://www.townofgb.org). We will try to assist you in any way possible.