

Dunn County – Winter Maintenance

Snow & Ice Removal Policy

1. General

The Dunn County Highway Department is responsible for the snow and ice removal of approximately 850 lane miles (425 centerline miles) of County Trunk Highways and additional 512 lane miles (209 centerline miles) of State Highways through a contract maintenance agreement with the WisDOT. The Department also assists local units of Government with snow and ice removal, which includes approximately an additional 136 lane miles (68 centerline miles).

2. Purpose

This policy and procedure provide a detailed overview of snow and ice control operations for the Dunn County Highway Department.

The Dunn County Highway Department follows the Winter Maintenance Policy set forth by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation for level of expectations for winter maintenance and the goal to achieve “passable roadways” within limitations imposed by climatological conditions, availability of resources, and environmental concerns during winter storm events.

3. Definitions

“Passable Roadway” - is defined as a roadway surface that is free from drifts, snow ridges, and as much ice and snow pack as is practical and can be traveled safely at *reasonable speeds*. A passable roadway should not be confused with a “dry pavement” or “bare pavement”

“Dry/Bare Pavement” is defined as a roadway that is essentially free of all ice, snow and any moisture from shoulder to shoulder. This “dry/bare pavement” condition may not exist until weather conditions improve to the point where this pavement condition can be provided.

“Reasonable Speed” is defined as a speed at which a vehicle can travel without losing traction. During and immediately after a winter storm event, a reasonable speed will most likely be lower than the posted speed limit. Motorists can expect some inconvenience and will be expected to modify their driving practices to suit the road conditions.

4. Snow Removal Procedures

The following section outlines the snow removal guidelines and procedures used by the Dunn County Highway Department. Exceptions to this process may occasionally be necessary as dictated by weather and road conditions.

Decision to Begin Snow Removal

Several factors impact when the Highway Department begins the snow removal process. These factors include, but are not limited to, current roadway conditions, current weather conditions, forecasted weather conditions, and the time of day. Each storm event presents unique challenges, which must be dealt with accordingly. It is possible for weather and road conditions to vary greatly from different parts of the County. The Highway Department will take all factors into consideration and will make a determination on the appropriate time to begin the snow removal process.

Dunn County plowing operations generally begin on **County** roads when there is 2" of accumulation or more and may affect travel during certain winter events. (County Roads: Lettered Highways) **State** roads will be maintained per the WisDOT Winter Maintenance Policy (State Roads: I-94, USH 12/29, STH 25, etc.)

Snow Removal Methods

Snow removal methods primarily are by means of plowing and the use of materials such as rock salt, salt/sand mixtures and de/anti-icing liquids. **County** roads typically receive salt/sand mixtures at locations such as intersections, hills, & curves. **State** roads typically receive rock salt & de/anti-icing liquids as deemed necessary.

Passable Roadway

The intent of the snow removal process within Dunn County is to maintain a safe environment for the traveling public. This does not mean that the traveled portion of a roadway will be cleared to the pavement. In fact, the public should be aware that the traveled portion of a roadway and/or bridge deck will at times be snow covered and slippery. These conditions could be for an extended period of time. Motorists should be aware of the road conditions and exercise caution when driving in these winter conditions.

The above general policy is intended as a guide in winter maintenance operations and changes may be deemed appropriate based on local conditions. Dunn County staff will determine if appropriate maintenance actions need to be taken outside of the general snow plowing policy.

5. Level of Service

The level of snow removal service within Dunn County is determined by the type of roadway being served. The Highway Department maintains Federal, U.S., State, County and some Town roadways.

State Highway maintenance during the winter months has two highway classifications: “High Volume” and “All Other”

- “High Volume” roads are considered 24 hour coverage during snow events and are typically 4 lane highways. (State Roads: I-94, STH 29 - 4 lanes, USH 12 Emergency Route)
- “All Other” roads are considered 18 hour coverage if conditions warrant during snow events and are typically 2 lane highways. Snow plowing services on these roads will include regular service from (4:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.) and emergency service as necessary. (State Roads: USH 12, STH 25, 29, 40, 64, 72, 79, 85, 170)

WisDOT Maintenance Information (<https://wisconsindot.gov/Pages/doing-bus/local-gov/hwy-mnt/winter-maintenance/default.aspx>)

County Highway maintenance during the winter months has no classifications and receive the same level of services.

- County Lettered Roads are considered 12-14 hour coverage if conditions warrant during snow events and are typically roads with various traffic volumes. Snow plowing services on these roads will include regular service from (4:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.) and emergency service primarily during the hours of (6:00 p.m. – 4:00 a.m.) (County Roads: A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, K, M, N, O, P, Q, S, T, U, V, W, X, Y, Z, BB, DD, EE, FF, HH, MW, PP, SS, VV, WW, XX, VVV).

The level of service and hours of operations are guidelines and may be modified on a case-by-case basis. The Highway Department works closely with the Wisconsin State Patrol & Dunn County Sheriff’s Department and will respond to specific requests as needed and determined by the appropriate personnel.

Snow Emergency

A snow emergency may be declared when the visibility declines to a point that is hazardous to the driving public or snowplow operators while a snow event is occurring. Under these conditions snowplowing operations may be suspended for a period of time until weather conditions improve. The Highway Commissioner has the authority to declare a snow emergency and the Highway Department will notify the State Patrol and Sheriff’s Department when it is in the best interest to declare a snow emergency event.

6. Operations

Wisconsin §346.915 Following Snowplows prohibits motorists from following a snowplow closer than 200ft. upon any highway having a posted speed of more than 35 miles per hour, and the snowplow is engaged in highway winter maintenance snow and ice removal and is utilizing the proper warning lights.

Wisconsin §346.94(5), §346.95(3) Miscellaneous prohibited or restricted acts &

Wisconsin §86.01 Materials left in highway

Prohibits the pushing of snow and other materials onto or across any public highway. Snow left in ridges or piles on the highway may create a potential safety concern for the traveling public and may impede the snow & ice removal process. Violations to this law are subject to fines.

Highway Department Assistance

It is the policy of the Dunn County Highway Department that no County equipment shall be used to push, pull or tow a stranded or unoccupied private vehicle from a roadway or ditch unless it is necessary to reopen a roadway or public travel way. In a life threatening situation, Highway Department personnel may provide assistance or call emergency response. At no time will any Highway Department personnel use a County vehicle to perform any snow removal on private or commercial property unless in a life threatening or emergency situation.

Road Condition Information

For information regarding winter weather & road conditions please utilize WisDOT 511 system: (<https://511wi.gov/>)

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