

Winter Road Maintenance – Frequently Asked Questions

1. Which roads get plowed first and why?

The Municipality's Winter Maintenance aims to provide safe roads and sidewalks during the winter season. The Municipality's has a 24/7 response team equipped with:

- Seven pieces of combination road plowing and de-icing equipment
- Two road plowing graders
- One front-end loaders, and
- One rubber tired backhoe

This response team maintains the Municipality's 360 kms of roadway, and approximately 21 kms of sidewalks. The Municipality also tracks weather conditions and deploys road temperature sensors outfitted to its fleet which monitors our roads for snow and ice detection.

We have established plans and routes for clearing snow, and ask that you refrain from calling during the first day of a snow event. After the snowfall **ends**, it can take

- 8-12 hours to clear priority roads, and;
- for all Municipal roads approximately 24 hours.

A larger or continuous snowfall event may extend the time necessary to clear snow from local streets and cul-de-sacs.

The Municipality follows the provincially prescribed standards for winter maintenance (Minimum Maintenance Standards for Municipal Highways, O. Reg. 239/02). Roads are categorized into six main classes. Class 1, 2 and 3 or priority roads, which include arterial and some secondary collectors, take first priority. Classes 4, 5 and 6, which include local urban streets, rural side roads and cul-de-sacs, have less priority.

Priority roads carry the higher volumes of traffic and are most easily identified as main (arterial) roads or secondary collector roads. These are the roads people use to get to business areas and in and out of the municipality. The 'other' roads are primarily residential or secondary routes and these are systematically plowed after the 'priority' routes are completed.

2. When can I expect my sidewalk to be cleared?

Sidewalks are cleared after snow accumulates in excess of five centimetres (two inches), and only after roads are cleared. Sidewalk clearing is generally completed within 24 - 48 hours after the **end of the storm**; however, when we have a heavy snowfall, or successive winter events back to back, it will take longer to clear all sidewalks. Sidewalks are cleared to a snow packed condition, as the snow equipment does not allow for clearing down to bare pavement

3. How come the plow damages my sod every year and when is it going to be repaired?

Sod damage is the result of two factors:

- The roadway and/or sidewalk plow operator may have difficulty finding the sidewalk or the edge of the road under a blanket of snow, or
- the ground may not be not frozen when the plows go by.

Once a path is cleared, subsequent trips by the sidewalk plow are made easier. If the sod was damaged during the first pass of the season, then the damage may not be discovered until the snow melts. Residents can either repair the damage themselves in the spring or they can call the Transportation Superintendent who will note down the address of the damage. Once the winter season is over, municipal staff will undertake these repairs.

4. I live on a corner lot. Why does the plow put so much snow in my driveway?

Residents living on corner lots or the first on the right of an intersection usually get more snow deposited in their driveways. When the snow plow turns right it sweeps a much larger area of the road than when it is traveling in a straight line, as well, the snow also does not discharge from the plow truck. Turning right effectively makes the plow push most of the snow ahead instead of moving it from the centre of the road to the side. The first property and driveway encountered after the plow straightens out usually gets more snow than others in the immediate area.

5. Who is responsible for clearing snow around Canada Post Community Mailboxes?

Canada Post is responsible for clearing the snow and ice around the community mailboxes. Contact Canada Post at 1-800-267-1177 for more information.

6. What do I do if the snow plow hits my mailbox?

If your mailbox has been damaged during snow removal, please call the Municipality at 519-268-7334 and leave your address with our staff. The Transportation Superintendent will inspect the damage to determine the cause. The Municipality does not repair or replace mailboxes knocked over by snow or from snow that is thrown off the plow blade.

7. Who is responsible for clearing snow from fire hydrants?

Residents are asked that they do not pile snow from their driveway or private property in such a way that covers fire hydrants. Cleaning around fire hydrants is a team effort in Thames Centre. Property owners are strongly encouraged to clear snow from fire hydrants on or around their property to ensure Thames Centre Fire Services can quickly gain access in the event of a fire. Should a resident not be able to clean the snow then fire fighters and/or municipal staff will undertake the snow removal.

8. What can I do to help?

- Be patient. In heavy snowfalls it takes us longer to get all our roads cleared.
- Be a good neighbour. Help those who may not be able to shovel their driveways and sidewalks.
- Don't park on the street during a snowfall - or immediately following a snowfall if plowing is still needed. Also, please do not park your vehicle at the very end of a driveway or across the sidewalk/boulevard area. Plow operators are not able to do their job properly if there are parked vehicles in the way.
- Keep a safe distance from plow trucks on the roads and do not attempt to pass. Vehicles attempting to pass create a safety risk for everyone on the road.
- **Don't place snow from sidewalks or driveways on the street. It creates a hazard for vehicles; the Highway Traffic Act prohibits the placing of snow or ice on a roadway.**