



TOWN OF WESTFORD PUBLIC WORKS

SNOW & ICE PROCEDURES

Westford's Storm Strategy

The Town of Westford Highway Department has over 175 miles of roads to maintain. In an effort to make the snow season as safe as possible, we offer the following tips and information. Please remember that each storm is different so our strategy must be adjusted accordingly to achieve the best results.

The Highway Department staff is well trained and dedicated to plow around the clock if necessary, to keep the roadways open and passable. If a plow truck is riding with its plow up, please do not be misled. They may be returning to the garage for fuel or repairs or might be headed to another section of town to assist with snow removal.

- ◆ Please be advised that Littleton Rd. (Rte 110), Route 495, Powers Rd. and a portion of Boston Rd. are maintained by Mass Highway.

Residents should not be concerned if they do not see their roadway plowed during the early part of a snowstorm. The Highway Department follows an assigned route plan where main roads and hills are plowed first. Please be patient, all town owned roads will eventually be plowed.

When The Snow Begins

When a snowstorm begins the Department responds by treating all roads with deicing chemicals. Treating the road surfaces serves two purposes - preventing snow and ice from bonding to the surface and to keep traffic flowing. Treating the roads takes approximately 2 1/2 – 3 hours. Please remember that our crews have to travel on snow covered, slippery untreated roads to get here at any hour of the day or night. Please be patient as the crews will be out as soon as possible to begin snow removal operations.

During The Storm

Plowing operations begin when there is an accumulation of **2 to 4 inches of snow** on road surfaces. Depending upon the severity of the storm, Town forces are assisted by hired contractors to expedite the process of snow removal. Each vehicle is assigned to a pre-determined route and will remain there until the storm subsides unless an emergency occurs that requires reassignment of equipment from one location to another. The main objective is to keep all roads passable during the storm. Unfortunately, it is not possible to keep the roads free of snow without filling in many driveways; therefore, when you clean the end of your driveway, deposit the excess snow to the downstream side of your driveway. This will minimize the redeposit of snow into the cleared opening when the plow makes its next pass.

- ◆ Please do not shovel, plow or blow snow or ice into the roadway. It is not only illegal, but can be a serious traffic hazard.
- ◆ If you have a private contractor plowing your driveway please make sure to remind them of this as you will be held responsible for their actions.
- ◆ The Town of Westford does not perform winter maintenance on sidewalks. Residents are encouraged to clear sidewalks in front of their property.

Following The Storm

After plowing is completed, roads are given a final treatment of deicing chemical. In the days following a storm, scraping and treating of roads continues depending upon weather forecasts. If colder weather is forecasted streets must be scraped of snow and slush to prevent icing of the surface when the temperature drops and also to widen the road edge so that drainage structures are exposed if the temperatures rise and melting occurs. As time allows, snow is removed from intersections where sight distance is a concern.

Winter Parking Ban

Residents are reminded that a winter parking ban is in effect from November 1st until April 1st.

- ◆ On-street parking is prohibited overnight or when snow operations are in effect.
- ◆ Vehicles that are illegally parked will be ticketed and towed at the owner's expense if they interfere with snow removal operations.

Recycling and Trash Containers

Please ensure that the curbside pickup of recyclables or trash containers do not interfere with snow removal efforts.

Fire Hydrants

Fire hydrants are under the control of the Westford Water Department. The Water Department asks residents with hydrants in front of or near their property to please clear the snow away from the area so that in an emergency the hydrant will be accessible.

- ◆ Questions regarding snow removal near hydrants should be directed to the Westford Water Department at (978)692-5529.

Sand and Salt

A mixture of sand and salt is available to residents (no contractors) at the designated area located outside of the gates at the Highway Garage on **Beacon Street**.

Town Right-of-Way

Homeowners should be aware that in most instances they do not own the land up to the edge of road pavement or sidewalk. The Town generally owns the land from the edge of roadway up to 15 feet back depending on the particular road. There may be underground utilities within these areas and homeowners should be careful as to what they place in these areas.

- ◆ Trees, shrubbery, fences, lawn sprinkler systems or gardens within the right-of-way may be damaged during snow removal operations.
- ◆ Basketball posts and nets are prohibited from being installed in the Town of Westford's right-of-way.
- ◆ The Town will not be responsible for damage to such items within the right-of-way.

Clearing your Driveway

The diagram below indicates the suggested driveway clearing method and best mailbox locations to avoid damage to your property, and to help minimize the amount of snow in your driveway after the plow passes. While plowing the roadways, Westford Highway Crews try to minimize the amount of snow that gets plowed into driveways. Also, as long as there is snow in the street, the Plow Driver will continue to plow the street. Some of this additional snow will end up at the driveway opening. We are very sorry for this inconvenience. **However, please know that it is the responsibility of the property owner to clear their driveway opening.** To avoid double work while clearing your driveway, try to shovel snow from your driveway after the plow has been by, and shovel the snow to the right side of your driveway as you face the road, instead of to the left.



Spring Repairs

Sometimes the grass strips along the roads are damaged while plowing. The Highway Department works to repair these areas as soon as possible. It may take until mid summer to repair these areas. The repair of grass surfaces generally consists of raking out the ruts and seeding with a standard highway grass seed. If your landscaping needs are such that this is unacceptable, you may choose to repair these areas on your own earlier in the spring.

Mailboxes

Listed below is the Town of Westford's Mailbox Policy. By following this policy you will minimize damage to your mailbox from snow & ice removal.

**TOWN OF WESTFORD DPW MAILBOX AND NEWSPAPER DELIVERY BOX
RIGHT-OF-WAY/INSTALLATION POLICY
POLICY APPROVED JANUARY 27, 2000**

No mailbox or newspaper delivery box (hereafter referred to as mailbox) will be allowed to exist on the Town of Westford's right-of-way if it interferes with the safety of the traveling public or the function, maintenance, or operation of the highway system. A mailbox installation that does not conform to the provisions of the regulation is an unauthorized encroachment under MGL Chapter 86 Section 3.

The location and construction of mailboxes shall conform to the rules and regulations of the U.S. Postal Service as well as to standards established by the Town. Town standards for the location and construction of mailboxes are available from:

Highway Department and Town Clerk.

A mailbox installation that conforms to the following criteria will be considered acceptable unless in the judgment of the Highway Superintendent the installation interferes with snow removal, the safety of the traveling public or the function, maintenance, or operation of the highway system.

LOCATION:

- ◆ No mailbox will be permitted where access is otherwise prohibited by law or regulation.
- ◆ Mailboxes shall be located on the right-hand side of the roadway in the direction of the delivery route. The bottom of the box shall be set at an elevation established by the U.S. Postal Service, usually between 3'6" and 4'0" above the roadway surface. The roadside face of the box shall be offset from the edge of the traveled way or top edge of curb a minimum distance of 6 to 12 inches, or the width of a gravel shoulder.
- ◆ Where a mailbox is located at a driveway entrance, it shall be placed on the far side of the driveway in the direction of the delivery route.
- ◆ Where a mailbox is located at an intersecting road, it shall be located a minimum of 75 to 100 feet beyond the center of the intersecting road in the direction of the delivery route.

STRUCTURE:

- ◆ Mailboxes shall be of light sheet metal or plastic construction conforming to the requirements of the U.S. Postal Service. Newspaper delivery boxes shall be of light sheet metal or plastic construction of minimum dimensions suitable for holding newspaper.
- ◆ No more than two mailboxes may be mounted on a support structure unless the support structure and mailbox arrangement has been shown to be safe by crash testing. However, lightweight newspaper boxes may be mounted below the mailbox on the side of the mailbox support.
- ◆ Mailbox supports shall not be set in concrete buckets unless the support design has been shown to be safe by crash tests when so installed.
- ◆ A single 4" x 4" or 4 ½" diameter wooden post or a metal post with a strength no greater than a 2" diameter standard strength steel pipe and embedded no more than 24" into the ground will be acceptable as a mailbox support.
- ◆ Mailbox support designs not described in this regulation will be acceptable if approved by the Highway Department.

SHOULDER AND PARKING AREA CONSTRUCTION:

- ◆ It will be the responsibility of the postal patron to maintain the shoulder adequately to permit all- weather vehicular access to the mailbox and postal patron is responsible for snow removal for access to mailbox.

REMOVAL OF NONCONFORMING OR UNSAFE MAILBOXES:

- ◆ Any mailbox that is found to violate the intent of this regulation shall be removed by the postal patron upon notification by the Town. At the discretion of the Town, based on an assessment of hazard to the public, the patron will be granted not less than 24 hours or more than 30 days to remove an unacceptable mailbox. After the specified removal period has expired, the Town at the postal patron's expense will remove the unacceptable mailbox.

MAILBOX REPLACEMENT IF DAMAGED BY SNOW REMOVAL:

- ◆ The Town does not replace mailboxes if the box is damaged by snow being discharged by the snowplow and if the plow does not come in contact with the mailbox or post.
- ◆ The Town does not replace plastic mailboxes. Plastic mailboxes in cold weather may become very brittle and are not suitable in our type of climate.
- ◆ The Town does not replace mailboxes that are in need of repair due to lack of maintenance or vandalism.
- ◆ The Town does not replace mailboxes if the front of the box extends past the curb line and is not at least 6 to 12 inches back from the curb line.
- ◆ The Town will only replace mailboxes if the Town's plow came in contact with a well-maintained mailbox or post.
- ◆ Mailboxes to be fixed will be put on a list and repaired when the Highway Department is back on a regular schedule and all weather related priorities are completed.
- ◆ The Town does not replace mailboxes that have rotten posts or spike type supports.
- ◆ Mailboxes will only be replaced with standard steel mailboxes, not to exceed \$10.00.
- ◆ Posts will only be replaced with pressure treated wooden posts, as shown below:

