

# **TOWN OF WESTHAMPTON HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT SNOW AND ICE POLICY**

## **Mission Statement**

It is our objective to remove snow and ice from Westhampton roadways and parking lots as safely, quickly, efficiently and cost effectively as possible, to restore normal traffic conditions. It is our goal to achieve safe driving conditions at the earliest practical time following a winter storm.

## **Responsibilities**

The Highway Department is responsible for removing snow and ice from approximately 40 miles of town roadways. Additionally, we maintain all town owned parking lots: (Town Hall and Annex, Library, Museum, Safety Complex, Elementary School and playground, Transfer Station, Cemetery, as well as our own yard.

## **Headquarters**

The Highway Department Building is located at 58 Hathaway Road. Telephone is 413 527-0136. Email: [westhamptonhighwaydept@comcast.net](mailto:westhamptonhighwaydept@comcast.net). Normal Work hours are Monday through Friday, 6:00 AM – 2:30 PM. After hours and during winter storms, an answering machine is available to take messages. In the event of severe emergencies, dial 911.

## **Crew**

The Highway Department has four full time employees: one Superintendent, one Foreman, and two crew members. All four employees operate equipment as needed for the duration of a winter storm. The department does not hire any private contractors for snow removal operations. The Department maintains a list of back up drivers/operators to run our own equipment in the event one of our regular employees is absent due to accident or sickness.

## **Vehicles/Equipment**

The Highway Department Vehicles used for winter storms are as follows:

1. 1985 Caterpillar grader with 11 ft. front plow and 10 ft. wing plow
2. 2006 John Deere bucket loader with 11 ft. plow
3. 2012 JCB backhoe with 11 ft. plow
4. 2015 FWD Western Star 6 wheeler with mid mount sander, 11 ft. front plow and 10 ft, wing plow.
5. 2001 Sterling 6 wheeler with 11 ft. front plow and slide in sander.
6. 2006 Sterling 6 wheeler with 11 ft. front plow and slide in sander.

## **Sanding/Salting/Anti-icing**

The town is divided into three sanding routes. The Foreman and the crewmembers each operate one of the three sanders and are responsible for their own route. Sanding operations start as soon as winter precipitation starts falling. We do not pre-treat our roads.

## **Pavement**

Generally, a 50/50 mix of sand and salt is spread on all hard surfaced roads to prevent the precipitation from bonding to the pavement and to help secure traction on the hills. The application rate varies, but is most often between 800 and 1200 lbs. per lane mile. Liquid anti-icing agents are used mostly at the end of a storm to burn off any residual snow/ice that remains on the main roads only. It takes about two hours to treat all hard surfaced roads with the standard 50/50 mix.

## Gravel Roads

Many factors play into whether the gravel roads will be sanded after a storm begins, including time of day, type of snow, temperature, and the condition of the gravel road at the start of the storm. The sand/salt ration used on gravel roads is one part salt to 7 parts sand; just enough to keep the sand from freezing while in the stock pile. Sanding the gravel roads adds 1 additional hour to the anti-icing operations.

## Snow Plowing Procedures

Plowing procedures depend on the type and length of the storm and the conditions expected after the storm. Generally plowing commences when there are 2 to 3 inches of snow on the ground and more is expected. However, plowing may not begin until later depending on time of day, or if/when freezing rain might be expected. While snow is falling, 4 plows are on the roads: 3 trucks with sanders and one road grader with wing and plow. Each has its own route to cover. During a storm, these 4 plows typically open up all the main roads first, and then work towards the side roads and gravel roads. During periods of heavy snow or during rush hour, it may become necessary to keep plows on the main roads only, in order to keep traffic moving and prevent the snow from becoming packed down. When this is required, plowing on side roads will be performed only after the main roads have been cleared.

Throughout plowing procedures, sanding, salting and anti-icing procedures will continue as needed. Generally, every time steep hills, curves and intersections are plowed on the main roads, they are retreated with another application of 50/50 sand/salt mix. The remaining parts of the main roads are retreated when the driver of each route determines it necessary.

Generally parking lots are not plowed until the storm has passed. However, in the case of deep snow, they will be opened up so as to allow access for emergency vehicles should there be a need to access the buildings. In most case, after the storm has ended, and during the final clean up process, the roads will receive one more application of sand/salt.

## Residents Driveways

The final clean up can take up to eight hours. Therefore some residents may have their driveways cleared before we have the roads completely cleared. That being said, chances are the end of your driveway may be filled in by the town plows after you have finished clearing it , sometimes more than once. Be assured this is not intentional or personal, but a necessary evil part of getting the roads cleared Please understand that the town can not come back to clear your driveway.

**Each and every storm is different, and out main objective is to get the roads safe and clear of snow/ice as quickly and as efficiently as possible.**

## After the Storm

All plows and equipment will be checked, serviced and prepared for the next storm. Sand, salt, and liquid de-icing supplies shall be restocked as needed. Snow banks throughout town shall be pushed back or benched off with wing plows and bucket loaders as needed to maintain sight distances at intersections and to make room for more snow.

## Westhampton General Bylaws

The following two sections taken from the Westhampton General Bylaws shall be included in this policy.

### Section 4 Snow Removal and Other Highway Maintenance Operations

- 7-4-31 The Superintendent of Streets, or any other officer having charge of the ways of the Town, shall have the authority for the purpose of removing snow and ice or repairing any way in the Town, to remove or cause to be removed to some convenient place any vehicle or obstruction interfering with such work. The cost of removal, disposition, and storage of any vehicle or obstruction from a Town right of way, shall be paid by the owner before such vehicle or obstruction is released to them. The schedule of such costs is to be fixed from time to time by the Selectboard. No vehicle or obstruction will be removed under this ordinance if the owner or person in charge has contacted town officials explaining the

situation and expressed the intention of immediately removing said vehicle or obstruction.

- 7-4-2 It shall be unlawful for any person to place, or have placed in the street or roadway any snow or ice being removed from driveways or other portions of the property. The property owner or tenant shall be held responsible for any such snow or ice found in the street or roadway and shall be subject to a fine of \$50.00 for each offense plus any costs or prosecution.

### **Damage to Private Property**

It should be noted that the municipality is **NOT** held responsible for damage to private property that is located within the public right of way. The right of way (ROW) is often up to 50' wide. And is often considered by abutting property owners to be their own property. This is not the case. In most cases, the ROW extends 10 to 15 feet beyond the edge of the paved or gravel road. Most all mail boxes are located within the public ROW. They exist by sufferance only, with the responsibility assumed by the home owner. The fact is mail boxes located within the ROW will, at some time, be damaged by the snow plowing process. It is the price we pay for Rural Free Delivery (R.F.D.). In most case, when a mailbox is damaged, the damage is caused by heavy wet snow coming off the end of the plow and hitting the box; not from the plow equipment coming in contact with the mail box. It is not possible for the town to repair or replace mail boxes that are damaged by snow only. However, if it is determined that the box was actually hit by the town snow plow, we will repair or replace it.

### **Town Buildings – Closures**

During inclement winter weather, the highway superintendent, in conjunction with to town's snow shovellers, will determine if town buildings and the transfer station are safely cleared of snow. It should be assumed that when Hampshire Regional School District delays or cancels school, there may be delays or cancellation of town building openings and transfer station. Closings will be posted on [www.westhampton-ma.com](http://www.westhampton-ma.com), the town's website, on WGGB TV, and on [www.wggb.com](http://www.wggb.com).

Lastly, please be patient. Snow removal is a very arduous and time consuming task. Your Highway Department workers do not get a shift change. They generally work around the clock until the job is done. We strive to provide the safest roadways at a reasonable cost, and in the shortest period of time. The cooperation and support of the residents of Westhampton is greatly appreciated.