

# Ward County Highway Department Snow & Ice Removal Policy

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**POLICY STATEMENT:** It is the policy of the Ward County Highway Department to remove snow from the County roads safely and quickly, and to provide reasonable ice control, while taking into consideration the availability of labor, equipment, and funding. This document includes general policies followed by the Ward County Highway Department and its operations pertaining to sanding and snow removal.

**OPERATION HOURS:** Normal working hours and office hours are Monday thru Friday from 8:00 am to 4:30 pm. Work outside of these hours, such as early morning, evening, and weekends, will be at the discretion of County Engineer or Road Superintendent. Typically during and after a storm, snow removal and sanding operations will be conducted between the hours of 6:00 am and 6:00 pm. Exceptions for potential emergencies will be made as determined appropriate by the supervisor. If you have a medical emergency, please contact the Sheriff's Department or 911. Work at courthouse parking lots may occur outside of normal operations hours.

**OPERATIONS IN ADVERSE CONDITIONS:** Equipment will not be dispatched when, in the judgment of the supervisor, low visibility or other conditions are such that the risk to operators and other motorists outweighs the benefits. The general guideline is that equipment will not be dispatched when the estimated visibility in open areas is less than 500 feet. In the event of police, fire or medical emergency, vehicles may be dispatched at the direction of the supervisor.

**ROUTE PRIORITIES:** The priority of which roads are plowed and in what sequence may vary, and are weather dependent, but go by the following guidelines. 1. Major Collector Routes: These are county major collector routes and are primarily commuter routes. 2. Minor Collector Routes: These roads consist of the remaining paved county roads and gravel county roads. 3. Local Roads\*: These roads are typically township roads, but can be roads for other public entities such as cities. \*Snow removal work may be performed for other political entities as equipment and labor availability permits, and shall be at the discretion of the County Engineer or Road Superintendent. Generally that would mean that operators would have to complete the first pass in both directions of assigned routes, all roads should be widened and the snow should be wing off. County roads should also be clear of any ground drifting that may make the roads impassable before performing any non-county work.

**LEVELS OF SERVICE:** Ward County does not have a bare pavement or bare road policy and roads may not be free of snow or ice. The following are general snow and ice removal policies: 1. Snow and ice removal may be limited to daylight hours, depending upon current weather conditions and the snow from the road will be removed as best as possible. 2. Snow removal typically will begin after two (2) inches of snow has accumulated on paved roads, and four (4) inches of snow has accumulated on gravel roads. 3. Sanding of the roads will be done at critical intersection, hills, curves and other hazardous areas. Snow and ice removal equipment may not be operating when wind velocities exceed 25 miles per hour.

**RURAL MAILBOXES:** The County shall not repair mailboxes unless actual contact is made by a snow removal unit. Ward County will not repair mailboxes damaged by snow as it is being removed from the roadway. Repairs to mailboxes, hit by snow removal equipment, will be performed by Ward County Highway Department personnel. Existing mailboxes or posts will be reused if undamaged, however, if the existing mailbox or post is significantly damaged, a new mailbox or post will be installed. If a mailbox or post is replaced, the box will be a standard metal box and the post will be a standard breakaway post, meeting Federal Highway Standards. If a mailbox post cannot be replaced do to frozen ground, a temporary mailbox will be used until Spring.

**OBSTRUCTIONS:** Obstructions on the road right of way such as hay bales, vehicles, or fences which might cause drifting shall be removed by the owners. 1. Hay bales need to be removed from the road right of way before November 1st, and after that time the county may remove the bales or burn them. 2. The county shall not be liable for damage to stalled or stranded vehicles on the traveled portion of the roadway or other obstructions which will interfere with snow and ice removal and abrasive placement. The owners of stalled or stranded vehicles should immediately notify the Sheriff's Department. A stalled or stranded vehicle blocking the road needs to moved as soon as possible, or the vehicle may be towed. 3. Vehicles shall also not be parked on the roadway surface or shoulder, and if a vehicle is parked on a personal driveway, it should be outside of the roadway clear zone, which is typically 15 to 20 feet from the edge of the roadway. **PRIVATE ROADS:** The County will not operate snow removal equipment on private roads. Normal county removal operations may result in snow or ice being deposited in driveways adjacent to public roads. The county will try to limit the amount of snow placed in private drives but when the snow on the roadway is heavy, the amount of snow left in a driveway may be heavy.

**SNOW PLACED ON ROADWAY:** County residents are to avoid adding to the hazards of wintertime driving by not placing snow from their driveway onto public roads and right of way. Snow dumped, plowed, pushed, or blown onto the roadway can create a serious hazard not only for motorists but also for snowplow equipment. NDCC 24-05-23 and 24-12-02 prohibits obstructing or causing to be obstructed any public highway or right of way. Piles of snow left on or near the road can freeze into a solid mass creating a hazardous situation for vehicles and snowplows. Accidents and damages caused by snow piles placed in the roadway may result in liability to the property owner. Piles of snow increase the chances of drifting snow onto the roadway. Property owners found in violation will be given notice and shall remove the snow. If the snow is not removed within a reasonable time, the county will remove the snow and the property owner will be billed.