



PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT
SNOW & ICE CONTROL POLICY
Adopted May 7, 2013

POLICY GOAL:

To keep people, products, and services moving safely within the County at the least cost to the taxpayers, considering the safety of the County maintenance staff and the traveling public during maintenance operation.

POLICY, PRECEDENCE, AND EFFECT:

This policy supercedes all previously written documents and unwritten policies on the subject of snow and ice control.

This policy takes effect upon adoption by the County Board and may be changed at any time.

SNOWPLOWING:

Snowplowing is provided to keep the roads safe and open to traffic. Plowing paved roads early reduces snow-pack on the roads and provides a safer driving surface.

It is the County's policy to provide snowplowing for townships and small cities within Mille Lacs County only after execution of an agreement. Services to townships and small cities will be provided after all county roads are cleared or along with county roads in the interest of economy and to minimizing dead head distances.

Subject to Minnesota Statute 160.21, it is the policy of Mille Lacs County to exchange snow plowing services with the adjacent counties and the Minnesota Department of Transportation.

It is the policy of Mille Lacs County to utilize all available maintenance staff and equipment (trucks and motor graders) as needed for county-wide snowplowing operations.

It is the policy of Mille Lacs County to start the snowplowing anytime if there is about one-inch of measurable snow subject to visibility, plowing conditions, quantity of snow and moisture content. School bus service is also considered.

It is the County's policy to start snowplowing at anytime during daylight hours when the snow accumulation reaches a point where it is starting to compact on bituminous roads on normal work days, subject to the discretion of the Maintenance Supervisor.

It is the policy of the County not to plow during blizzard conditions when visibility is impaired or when the affect of the plowing is lost in less than 3 hours due to continuous accumulation and drifting.

It is the County's policy to suspend plowing at 6 p.m. unless extended by the Engineer or Maintenance Supervisor.

It is the policy of Mille Lacs County to place priority on county roads when it becomes apparent all county roads cannot be cleared until the next day.

It is the County's goal to have all county roads open to traffic within 32 hours after a snowstorm subsides, if possible.

The County will use its best effort to open city and township roads as soon after all County roads are opened.

SANDING:

After an ice storm, the County will, in daylight, attempt to sand as much as possible.

Sanding is provided to increase traction so traffic can flow safely. Salt is used in sand to keep it from freezing and allow application in cold weather. The County is concerned about the environmental effects of salt and desires to use the minimum amount needed to prevent storage piles from freezing and provide safe roads.

It is the County's policy to use a mixture of salt/sand with a 5-20% mix of salt.

It is the County's policy to sand controlled intersections, curves, and hills as soon as possible after plowing operations are completed, usually at the same time as plowing.

It is the County's policy not to sand isolated patches, black ice, or freezing rain except during daylight hours.

Continuous sanding of the roads and providing bare pavement is not financially or ecologically feasible, and shall not be done.

When roads become snow packed, spot sanding at the discretion of the Maintenance Supervisor will be provided. Usually Mille Lacs County sands hills, curves, intersections, and spot sand the remainder of the roads about every 500 feet. Sanding is usually done after all plowing is completed.

Sanding of gravel roads will normally not be done due to the damage caused in the spring and lack of manpower, funds, and environmental consideration.

This policy provides consistent expectation for the public regarding snowplowing county-wide. Mille Lacs County will plow any day of the week as needed, except in blizzard conditions. The County has only one shift of up to 12 hours each day.

MAILBOX POLICY:

Winter time is also a very hard time for mailboxes. The County does have a policy regarding placement and support of mailboxes, which includes the recommendations of the U.S. Postmaster and the Minnesota Department of Transportation. County residents are encouraged to comply with the recommended supports. A copy of the policy and sketches are available at the County Public Works Department and on the County website. The County will replace damaged mailboxes due to direct hit of the plow (not from snow) with a swing away type. The County, with the approval of the County Engineer, may replace mailbox supports on hills and curves where they cause a hazard to the plowing operation.

STATE REGULATIONS:

As good neighbors and motorists, county residents are encouraged to avoid adding to the hazards of wintertime driving by not placing snow from driveways onto public roads. This includes 'plowing across the street'. Snow dumped, pushed, blown or shoveled onto a roadway can create a serious hazard not only for the motorist, but also for snow removal equipment. Minnesota Statute 160.215 prohibits obstruction or deposit snow or ice on any highway. Penalty for such a violation is a misdemeanor. A person responsible for depositing snow onto a roadway may also be liable in a civil action if damages or injuries occur as a result of the action.

EDUCATIONAL RESPONSIBILITY:

It is the policy of the County to advise the Mille Lacs County residents of the County's policy and accept written comments from them on suggested changes to the policy.

It is the policy of the County to review these policies as needed and to consider suggestions from the public.

When in season, it is the policy of Mille Lacs County to publish snow plowing and related pertinent information on the Mille Lacs County website.

DRIVER'S RESPONSIBILITY

It is the responsibility of the drivers to drive in a responsible manner consistent with winter road conditions and the weather. At times it is recognized that road conditions may be such that it is not wise or it is impossible to drive until conditions improve.