



Winter Road Maintenance - Frequently Asked Questions

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 has a 24/7 response team equipped with:

- Fourteen pieces of combination road plowing and de-icing equipment
- Five tandem axel combination plow/sanding trucks
- One tri axel combination plow/sanding truck
- One single axel combination plow/sanding truck
- Six road graders equipped with plow/wing and carbide ice blades
- One sidewalk tractor equipped with a blower and sander attachments
- Two rubber-tired backhoes and
- Two patrol trucks equipped with sanders and road temperature readers

This response team maintains the Municipality's 948 lane kms of roadway, and approximately 20 kilometers of sidewalks. The Municipality also tracks weather conditions and deploys road temperature sensors outfitted to its patrol vehicles 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 2-3 hours to clear priority roads, and 5-6 hours to clear all of Zorra's roads and streets.

A larger or continuous snowfall event and windy conditions causing drifting 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.

When can I expect my sidewalk to be cleared?

Sidewalks are cleared after snow accumulates in excess of eight centimeters (3 inches). 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.

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:

1. 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
2. the ground may not be 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 Director of Public Works who will note down the address of the damage. Once the winter season is over, municipal staff will undertake these repairs.

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.

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.

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 519-485-2490 and leave your address with our staff. The Director of Public Works 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.

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. Plows have to swing out into the opposite lane frequently to clear the wing of the plow of obstacles such as mailboxes and signs ect. Attempting to pass while our plows are maneuvering can cause a collision either with your vehicle or the obstacle the plow is trying to maneuver around.
- Keep a safe distance from plow equipment at intersections, plows will turn right and push snow clear of the shoulder then back up across the intersection to continue plowing the opposite side of the road. Please be patient and stay back, as it is extremely hard to see vehicles that have crept up close to the back of our plows.
- 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.