



WINTER MAINTENANCE POLICY

GENERAL

The purpose of the Benton County Winter Maintenance Policy is to provide the priorities and procedures used to remove snow and ice on Benton County roads and highways. The goal of this policy is to create safe and passable roads within a reasonable period of time after a snow event ceases to have accumulating precipitation. Each winter storm has its unique characteristics and factors such as storm intensity and duration, wind, temperature and moisture content affect the total amount of snow and/or ice accumulation. This policy also serves as a guide to the County Engineer and Maintenance Superintendent to make decisions as to when to deploy snow removal equipment.

Strict adherence to this policy does not guarantee dry, bare pavements and it should not be expected that these conditions will exist after a winter storm event. The Benton County Highway Department will endeavor to maintain adequate traction for vehicles properly equipped for winter driving conditions.

BASIS OF POLICY

Certain roads in the County have a greater volume of traffic and require a higher priority for maintenance to serve the users. The concern of safety, general welfare, and duration of travel necessitate that priority be given to certain roads. However, in order to provide an efficient operation, it may be necessary to partially complete a lower priority road to reach a road of higher priority. In general snow and ice removal should follow the following priority:

- All bituminous/concrete surfaced county roads with the highest traffic volumes
- Lower volume bituminous/concrete surfaced county roads
- Gravel surfaced county

Emergencies such as power outages, ambulance calls, fires, etc. may take precedence over all other established maintenance routines.

The County Engineer and/or Maintenance Superintendent shall make the decision when snow and ice control measures shall be implemented. In the case of an absence a designee of the County Engineer will make the decision to deploy snow and ice control measures.

SNOW REMOVAL POLICY

Benton County's "Snow Removal Policy" shall provide the following minimum levels of service.

Snow removal shall begin when accumulation has reached a condition where it inhibits traffic flow or is starting to compact on bituminous surfaced highways. Plowing will continue on said roadways as visibility allows.



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Snow removal on gravel roads shall commence after an accumulation of four (4) inches or more. Conditions such as wheel track “build up” or drifting snow may warrant special consideration for variations in this policy as determined by the County Engineer or Maintenance Superintendent.

Generally, the County’s snow removal operation by plowing will commence no later than 5:00 A.M. after an afternoon or late evening storm unless otherwise dictated by visibility and conditions.

The Department shall endeavor to have all county roads passable to traffic within eight (8) hours after an average or “normal” snow storm subsides.

The County Engineer or Maintenance Superintendent will be in contact with area school Districts on road conditions, snow removal progress and to be informed of emergency school schedule changes due to weather conditions.

The County Engineer or Maintenance Superintendent shall make the decision to deploy snow removal equipment. Likewise, County Engineer or Maintenance Superintendent may recall snow removal equipment because of adverse conditions which may endanger the employee’s safety; or when the existing conditions are such that efforts are no longer effective and risking the safety of the traveling public. They shall also be responsible for revising work schedules during the week and weekends to achieve the maximum amount of efficiency.

The Department shall also be available to assist in any emergency on public or private roads when requested to do so by the County Sheriff’s Department.

Snow will be removed from the area adjacent to the bridge rails and approach guard rails when depths reach two-thirds (2/3) the height of the bridge rail or approach guard rail. The priority of this operation will follow that of snowplowing and sanding and will be done as normal work schedules, temperatures and weather conditions allow. Intersections that have restricted visibility due to snow piles will be cleared of the obstructions as time, normal work schedules and weather conditions permit.

ICE CONTROL - SANDING

Sanding operations shall provide the following levels of service:

- Roads are usually not continually sanded. The goal is not to provide a dry, “bare” pavement.
- Controlled intersections, curves and hills shall be sanded to provide an aid to stopping. This operation will commence after the plowing operations have been completed or as otherwise dictated by actual field conditions or emergencies may warrant.
- Sanding will be done utilizing a normal mixture of sand and 10-15% (by volume) sodium chloride (salt). A greater percentage of salt may be use to accelerate the rate of melting if conditions warrant.
- If the temperature is less than -10 degrees F, application of a sand-salt mixture has very little effect on snow and ice and the operation will be postponed until such time that temperature and sun light conditions improve.





- Sanding operations will normally commence no later than 5:00 A.M. Weather conditions may dictate a later starting time will include high winds (velocities greater than 25 MPH), temperatures colder than -10 degrees Fahrenheit. Weather conditions that may dictate an earlier starting time or some other measure of effort would include an accumulation of black ice or freezing rain. During these conditions, actual starting times will be determined by the County Engineer or Maintenance Superintendent.
- Sanding on straight segments of county roads will be done only during extreme conditions as determined by the Maintenance Superintendent or County Engineer. Conditions to be considered would be long stretches of very slippery snowpack which may warrant a light application of sand-salt mixture to provide a small measure of intermittent skid resistance.
- Sanding will generally be done on bituminous or concrete surfaced roads only. An exception will be intersections on gravel roads that are located in shaded areas during the time of the day that is normally considered to experience the warmest temperatures. These areas will be determined by the County Engineer or Maintenance Superintendent based on past experience. Other isolated areas may be considered when manpower and equipment is available but approval can only be given by the County Engineer or Maintenance Superintendent.

DRIVEWAY PLOWING

Snow or ice removed from private driveways shall not be deposited on public roadways for removal by Public Works Department employees. Minnesota State Statute 160.2715 makes it illegal to deposit snow on public roadways. In addition to being unlawful, a person responsible for depositing snow on a highway may also be liable in a civil lawsuit if damages or injuries occur as a result of the action. Pushing snow across the road and leaving it in a pile on the opposite roadway shoulder may also cause a drifts to form, which may result in a condition in which will eventually add extra expense to the County's snow removal operation.

MAILBOXES

The Public Works Department will replace a damaged mailbox only if it was properly located and positioned on recommended supports and was actually struck by snow removal equipment. The County Public Works Department will, on request, provide a standard drawing of the type of support that is recommended. The correct support is also available for purchase from the Department.

EFFECTIVE DATE

The effective date of this policy is the date that is adopted by the Benton County Board of Commissioners.

CONTACTS

To contact someone regarding this policy please call the Benton County Public Works Department/ Highway Department at 320-968-5051.



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Approved and adopted, this 4th day of October, 2016.

Spencer C. Buerkle, Chair
Benton County Board of Commissioners

ATTEST:

Montgomery Headley
Benton County Administrator



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