

TITLE: SNOW AND ICE MANAGEMENT POLICY
SECTION: ENGINEERING & PUBLIC WORKS
POLICY NO.: 31600-25

APPROVAL DATE: March 23, 2026

CAO Signature: 

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish the Town of Amherst's priorities, and service level expectations for snow and ice management to ensure streets, sidewalks, fire hydrants and parking lots are cleared of snow and ice in a safe and timely manner.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all Town snow and ice management activities and establishes Council-approved service levels and guiding principles.

POLICY STATEMENT

The Town of Amherst is committed to delivering winter maintenance services using a risk-based approach that prioritizes pedestrian and vehicular safety, emergency access, and responsible use of municipal resources.

This policy establishes service levels and guiding principles using a priority and risk based approach to snow and ice management activities. Detailed operational practices, routes, and thresholds are set out in the companion Snow and Ice Management Operating Procedure.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- Public safety is top priority.
- Decisions reflect weather conditions, risk, and available resources.
- Service levels are applied consistently.
- Environmental impacts are considered.

SERVICE LEVEL EXPECTATIONS – GENERAL

The service level expectations outlined in this policy represent reasonable operational objectives under typical winter conditions, that can sometimes be unpredictable. Actual response times and outcomes may vary depending on the severity and duration of the snow/ice event.

LEVEL OF SERVICE – SNOW PLOWING

Roadways

The objective is that all Town streets will be cleared of snow within six (6) hours following the end of a snowstorm of up to 30 centimeters, with the following level of service expectation:

Priority-1 Streets

- Plow continuously during storm, conditions permitting
- Typically plowed “curb to curb” within 4 hours after storm ends

Priority-2 Streets

- Plow continuously during storm, conditions permitting
- Typically plowed “curb to curb” within 6 hours after storm ends

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For the purposes of this policy, “**curb to curb**” refers to a snow removal standard where snow is cleared across the full width of the roadway from one curb line to the opposite curb line to allow for the safe passage of vehicles. This standard does not mean the roadway surface between the curbs will be completely free of snow or ice. Some snow or ice may remain along the curb or gutter line, as a result of normal winter maintenance operations and weather conditions.

Sidewalks

The objective is that all Town sidewalks will be cleared of snow within twenty-four (24) hours following the end of a snowstorm of up to 30 centimeters, with the following level of service expectation:

Priority-1 Sidewalks

- Cleared of snow within 12 hours

Priority-2 Sidewalks

- Cleared of snow within 24 hours

During Street Clearing Operations

- Staff will maintain pedestrian accessibility from the Downtown area to the South Albion Street commercial area during street clearing operations, depending on the severity and duration of the snow event and as outlined in the Operating Procedure.

Public Parking Lots

- Snow will be removed by private contractors before 8:00 a.m. each day.

Public Buildings

- The public entrances and adjacent sidewalks to Town operated facilities will be cleared of snow daily, before the building is open to the public.

LEVEL OF SERVICE – FIRE HYDRANTS

The objective is that fire hydrants will be accessible to emergency personnel within ninety-six (96) hours following the completion of snow clearing operations, for snowstorms up to 30 centimeters.

LEVEL OF SERVICE - SALTING

Salting will be undertaken on streets and sidewalks to improve conditions for vehicles and pedestrians by mitigating icy conditions. Salting operations are not intended to eliminate all ice or winter hazards.

Streets

The objective is that salting will begin when conditions warrant based on a risk-based assessment conducted by the on-call supervisor or when requested by the Amherst Police Department. The level of service expectation being:

Priority-1 Streets (designated Salt Route)

- Salted to achieve bare pavement conditions within 12 hours following the completion of snow removal operations.

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Priority-2 Streets

- Salting of remaining streets after snow removal operations are completed, the objective is to have all streets salted within 24 hours of the completion of snow removal operations.

Sidewalks

The objective is that all Town sidewalks will be salted, when conditions warrant, within twenty-four (24) hours following the end of sidewalk snow clearing operations, with the following level of service expectation:

Priority-1 Sidewalks

- Salted within 12 hours of the completion of snow removal operations

Priority-2 Sidewalks

- Salted within 24 hours of the completion of snow removal operations

Public Parking Lots

- Will be checked daily before 8:00am for slippery conditions by supervisory staff and salted when conditions warrant to mitigate icy conditions. Further periodic checks are to be made as conditions warrant throughout the day.

Public Buildings

- The public entrances and adjacent sidewalks to Town operated facilities will be checked daily for slippery conditions and salted when conditions warrant to mitigate icy conditions before the building is open to the public. Further periodic checks are to be made as conditions warrant throughout the day.

For the purposes of this policy, “**as or when conditions warrant**” salting refers to the application of salt or other ice control materials when, in the judgment of the on-call supervisor, one or more of the following risk factors are present:

- Freezing rain, frost, or refreeze conditions are occurring or forecast.
- When temperatures are near freezing and moisture is present, creating a risk of black ice conditions.
- Icy or slippery conditions are observed or reported.
- Weather forecasts support the need for salt application.

The timing and extent of salting operations will be determined through the risk-based assessment and documented.

MAJOR STORMS

A major storm may be declared when snowfall intensity or duration exceeds the Town’s ability to maintain normal service levels. During major storms, operations will focus on maintaining emergency access and critical transportation corridors, as outlined in the Operating Procedure.

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In a major storm or emergency, and when requested, Town crews will be made available at any time to clear streets or fire hydrants in support of Police, Fire, or Emergency Health Services (EHS) operations. Other emergent situations will be dealt with at the discretion of the on-call supervisor.

Emergency response activities shall take precedence over routine winter maintenance operations.

SNOW REMOVAL AND HAULING

Snow hauling will be undertaken within 48 hours where snow accumulation presents safety, accessibility, or operational concerns at locations as determined and set out in the Operating Procedure.

SALT MANAGEMENT

The Town of Amherst is committed to the efficient management of its road salt, while continuing to provide effective winter maintenance for the safety of motorists and winter maintenance workers.

The Town will demonstrate environmental responsibility by implementing and maintaining a Salt Management Plan (SMP) and associated best management practices.

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ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Title/Role	Responsibilities
Director of Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure the policy is reviewed periodically and updated as needed to reflect changes in best practices and ensure it meets the needs of the Town. Be able to interpret and explain policy content
Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review Policy recommendations for approval consideration (approve, reject or edit)
Operations Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement policy through operating procedures

For Administrative Use Only:

VERSION LOG

Amendment Description	Policy Owner	Approved By	Approval Date
<p>Policy Revised to:</p> <p>Include salting of priority-2 streets (streets not on the designated salt route) will be salted after snow removal operations are completed, with an objective to have these streets salted within 24 hours of the completion of snow removal operations. Previously, "side streets" were salted only as needed.</p> <p>Define the term "as needed" has been removed from the policy and replaced with "when conditions warrant" and has been defined in the policy.</p> <p>Create a Council-approved policy and a separate operating procedure.</p>	Director of Operations	Council	March 23, 2026

Minutes Reference Dates: 24 November 2014

23 November 2015

29 November 2021