

RM of Mervin No. 499

POLICY TITLE		ADOPTED BY	
Snow Plow Policy		Council Resolution	544-18
ORIGIN/AUTHORITY	JURISDICTION	EFFECTIVE DATE:	PAGE #
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1.0 OBJECTIVES

- 1.1 The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for the Public Works Department staff to follow in order to ensure consistent practices for snow removal.

*** Some variations in this plan may be necessary as special snow conditions may arise.**

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Rural Municipality of Mervin No. 499 maintains approximately 376 miles of Municipal roads during the winter, not including the 12 Organized and 6 Un-organized Hamlets located within the R.M. In order to reasonably meet the public's expectations, the following policy will apply.

3.0 POLICY

3.1 HOURS OF OPERATION

In a snow event, a check for snow will be conducted by the Public Works Foreman (or his alternate) first thing in the morning and if the snow fall is sufficient to require snow plowing, the Public Works Foreman will organize to have roads plowed, at his discretion. When a heavy wind storm has occurred, the Public Works Foreman will determine if it is necessary for all or some plows to clear possible snow drifts within the Municipality. When blizzard conditions exist, plowing will begin when it subsides. When plowing is required, the entire route is done in the most efficient order. Operator duty shifts are generally limited to a maximum of 11 hours per day for safety. Operations will be halted when: (a) service levels are reached, (b) coverage time has elapsed, (c) conditions are too hazardous or (d) reasonable accomplishments cannot be made. After a major storm, cleanup operations will be on-going for multiple days. In the event of a severe storm where it is deemed necessary that additional equipment will be required, the Municipality may hire individual contractors to assist the Municipality in clearing the roads in a timely manner. While it is acknowledged that voluntary assistance is sometimes provided by general ratepayers or contractors in the event of a severe storm event, **ONLY** those contractors or individuals that are contacted and approved by the Municipality's Foreman or designated alternate to assist in snow plowing efforts will be financially compensated.

3.2 ROUTE DETERMINATION

The road and route determination will be decided on by the Public Works department. Typically, the order of snow plowing will follow the classification of roads. The roads that will be plowed first will be the major arteries, then the minor arterials, then the major collectors and finally the minor collectors. The roads will be plowed according to a route that allows the grader operator to complete the route with the minimal amount of back tracking. Therefore, some minor roads may be plowed first in order to provide the most efficient plowing schedule. Any road that has historically not been plowed will continue to be unmaintained during the winter months unless it is determined that the road is adequate for plowing. Many factors will be considered when determining road adequacy and maintainability during typical and atypical conditions and residence access requirements.

Hamlets and personal driveways will be snow plowed after all roads have been completed unless it is convenient for the operator to clear the snow while he is in the near vicinity but it will be at the sole discretion of the operator. In certain circumstances where it is expedient for the operator to go into a yardsite to turn around due to the road terminating and rather than trying to perform a two point turn, providing permission is granted from the land owner, the Municipality will plow out the landowners driveway for ½ of the minimum rate to be charged taking into consideration the convenience for the operator. Furthermore, if the land owner does not want the Municipality to plow his yard and upon the landowner's permission, the operator will go into the landowner's yard and turn around with the blade in the upwards position.

3.3 SANDING ROADWAYS AND INTERSECTIONS

Sand used for roads and intersections must be kept dry. The R.M. of Mervin currently has limited facilities to store sand, therefore the supplies are limited. Until storage can be increased, sanding is done on a limited basis and for emergencies only. Sanding will be prioritized and concentrated on intersections, corners and hills. Sanding is not done during a snowfall event since the snow covers the sand and it is scraped away with the subsequent plowing passes. Sanding in one circumstance does not create a reasonable expectation that the same area will always be sanded.

3.4 STRANDED MOTORISTS

Plow operators may assist stranded motorists in certain circumstances. Plow operators will not attempt to remove a stuck vehicle unless approved by the Public Works Foreman (or his alternate). If the plow operator is approved to assist the stranded vehicle, the Plow operator should ensure that the stranded motorist is responsible for hooking up the towing rope to his own vehicle to limit any potential liability. If the operator is requested to hook the tow rope to the vehicle and agrees, the operator must first obtain a signed liability waiver from the motorist for any damages which may result from hooking up and towing the stranded vehicle.

3.5 RESIDENTIAL PLOWING & PRIVATE DRIVES

Normal snow removal operations may result in snow being deposited in private drives. Residents are responsible for clearing snow from private driveways. Snow from private driveways shall not be placed on the municipal roadway or shoulders. Do not plow snow from driveways onto or across municipal roads. Piles of snow left on or near the road can freeze into a solid mass creating a hazardous situation for vehicles and snowplows. Piles of snow increase the chance of drifting onto the roadway. Accidents and damages caused by snow piles placed in the roadway may result in liability to the property owner. Anyone found plowing snow or who has plowed snow onto the municipal right-of-way may be charged with a misdemeanor.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Questions or concerns regarding Municipal road snow removal should be directed to the R.M. Office at (306) 845-2045 during normal business hours.

INFORMATION FOR THE PUBLIC – WHAT YOU CAN DO

When icy or slick conditions exist, motorists should use extreme caution and slow down.

When heavy snow and blizzard conditions exist, unnecessary travel should be avoided. Be prepared. Always have on hand at a minimum the following items: Non-perishable food and water for a minimum of five days, first aid kit and an extra supply of medication, personal hygiene supplies, extra clothing including gloves, footwear, blankets and sleeping bags, extra food for pets and livestock, flashlights and a radio (check with your local electric company for the newest non-battery items) and snow removal equipment including a shovel. Avoid using candles. Have a safe alternate source of heat. Keep a full propane tank (if applicable). Have a private snow removal service scheduled.

Make sure that your tires are in good condition. Have your tread checked before it snows. Tires adequate in dry conditions may no longer be appropriate for snow and ice conditions. Always carry approved traction devices (chains/cables) and learn how to install them. Carry a shovel, a towrope and a bag of cat litter to use under the tires for traction.

Plan ahead, be prepared and do not travel if you do not need to. Carry a cell phone. In case of a vehicle breakdown or becoming stuck in the snow, carry a survival kit consisting of a blanket(s) or a sleeping bag, extra clothing, water, snacks, first aid kit, tire chains or cables, a tow strap, jumper cables, shovel, ice scraper and a flashlight. Allow extra time for travel and drive accordingly. Let someone know your intended route and expected time of arrival. Keep the gas tank at least half full.

If you are trapped in your car in a winter storm, **stay in the car**. Do not leave the car to look for help unless help is visible within 100 yards. Display a “call for help” sign. Hang a brightly colored cloth on the antenna to signal for help. To keep warm, turn on the car’s engine for about 10 minutes each hour. Run the heater and lights only (avoid running the battery down). **Keep the snow away from the car’s exhaust pipe to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning.**

Please caution your children not to play in the streets or on the snow berms within the road right-of-ways, this is very dangerous. Do not allow children to build snow caves in the snow berms. This could be fatal. Explain to your children that plow drivers may not see them or be able to stop in time to avoid hitting them.

SUMMARY OF THE POLICY

This policy has been developed to provide general guidelines for both Municipal personnel and the traveling public. This policy intends to cover the majority of situations normally encountered in winter storm events. If certain situations arise that are not part of the above policy, the Public Works Foreman will deal with them on a case-by-case basis. Each decision to mobilize the snowplow crew is a judgment call based on the particular weather conditions combined with past experience along with the resources available at the time and therefore may not adhere strictly to this general policy.