City of Danville, Virginia

Snow Removal

Frequently Asked Questions

What happens during a snow or ice event?
Our work begins well in advance of a snow or ice event. We monitor the weather using an advanced weather forecast link. When the forecast indicates a possible winter weather event, we mount salt spreaders and plows to the trucks and hook up the brine tankers. We have 22 trucks and three brine tankers.

When a winter storm warning is issued, we send our brine tankers on designated routes to apply brine. Brine is a saltwater solution used to treat roads before snow and ice falls. It helps prevent snow and ice from adhering to the pavement and reduces slick spots. This solution easily will wash off vehicles with soap and water.

Depending upon the timing and nature of the pending storm, we place snow removal crews on standby. Once the storm starts, we send salt trucks on designated routes to apply salt as necessary. Salt is effective to temperatures as low as 20 ^{o}F to 25°F.

How do you decide which streets are included on these brine and salt routes?
The brine and salt routes include bridges, roadways that carry the heaviest traffic volumes, and roadways that serve industrial areas.

Why don't we place brine and salt on all the streets in the city, specifically residential streets?
The cost would be excessive. For example, we use 300 tons of salt only on the current designated routes during a typical winter storm. At $90 per ton, 300 tons of salt would cost a total of $27,000.

We also would need additional equipment to apply brine and salt citywide. For example, it takes us 12 hours with three tankers to apply brine only on the current designated routes.

A balanced level of service based on roadway classification and traffic volumes reduces the cost of equipment and the usage of brine and salt. This level of service has long proven to maximize available tax dollars and minimize environmental damages.

When do you begin plowing the roadways?
We begin plowing roadways usually when one inch of snow or ice has accumulated on the road surface. Plowing continues only on highest traffic volume roads until the end of the snow event. After the end of snowfall and the primary highways are clear, plowing moves to industrial areas, and then to roadways that connect residential areas to the primary highways, and finally to residential areas. Generally, it takes 24 hours after the snow event has ended to clear all residential streets. We do not clear private streets and alleys.

How do I learn about road conditions?
Our telephone lines are understandably busy during severe weather conditions. We advise limiting your travel, or staying off the roads entirely if possible. Check for newspaper, radio and television bulletins about road conditions.

Call us primarily to alert us if a street has been missed or if there is some special problem relating to the snow removal operations. Please do not call for missed residential streets until 24 hours after the snow event has ended.

I have a medical condition. Can you plow my street in case there is an emergency and an ambulance needs to get through?
The POTENTIAL for a medical emergency does not warrant priority treatment. Anyone needing an ambulance in a medical emergency should contact **9-1-1.** Necessary steps will be coordinated.

Utilize **9-1-1** only in life threatening emergencies or for emergency fire and rescue services. If you need help, but it's not an emergency, please contact the Police non-emergency number, 434-799-6510.

Why does the plow not remove all of the snow from my road?
In certain snow events, the snow and ice bonds to the road surface so tightly that the plows cannot break it free and scrape the surface clean. Once we have salted and plowed a street, the interaction of the salt and vehicular traffic is required to melt the remaining snow cover. Streets with low traffic volumes, therefore, will remain snow-covered longer.

Why do the plows always push snow into my driveway?
For a resident, this can be quite annoying, but we, unfortunately, cannot help it. We must remove the snow from the travelled portion of the road. When the City receives a heavy snowfall, if possible, do not shovel your driveway until after the plow has gone by.

If you must shovel, do not throw the snow out onto the roadway as you may create a hazard for another vehicle.

Why don't you clean my driveway?
The City does not remove snow or ice from residential or commercial driveways because the cost would be excessive and removing snow from curbs and driveways would drastically slow the snow removal process.

I only have on-street parking. Why do you always plow snow against my car?
The City must remove the snow from the travelled portion of the road. The plow operator cannot push the snow away from the parked car into oncoming traffic, as it would create a hazard. Residents are asked, where possible, not to park on the roads, eliminating the chance of plow operators damaging vehicles and allowing for a more efficient plowing operation.

Who removes the snow from sidewalks?
Under City Code Section 35-22, snow and ice removal from sidewalks is the responsibility of property owners or occupants of a building or lot and should be completed within 24 hours after it ceases snowing or sleeting. Snow-covered sidewalks increase the likelihood of citizens slipping and falling.

Who is responsible for the clearing of handicapped ramps?
The abutting property owner is responsible to clean the handicapped ramp to make safe passage to the roadway pavement.

Public Works Department
Regular office hours: 8 a.m. - 5 p.m., Monday-Friday
Snow operation hours: 24 hours, 7 days

Phone: For general information during a snowstorm, call 434-799-5245.
Website: www.danville-va.gov