

Acknowledgement

The Highway Department's efforts and success would not be possible without the support of the Town of Porter Town Board. You, the Town of Porter taxpayer and resident, are a very important part of a successful snow and ice control campaign. Your understanding and cooperation are an integral part of our plan. To help inform you regarding our methods and give you a few helpful hints, we have compiled the following text.

Again, I would like to stress this is a **team** effort; and I would like to give thanks to all of **our** Highway Department employees, the Niagara County Sheriff's Department, the Lewiston PD, the Volunteer Fire departments, EMS Ambulance, our neighboring highway departments and all of the residents of the community for working together to provide a safe and healthy environment in the Town of Porter.

David Burmaster
Town of Porter Highway Superintendent

Dear Town of Porter Resident:

It is the Town of Porter's policy to provide winter road maintenance service through its Highway Department. The goal of this policy is to provide for safe and efficient transportation within the constraints of the Town's budgetary resources to the traveling public on all roads maintained by the Town of Porter. In an effort to provide a safe driving experience, the following reasonable written plan of service shall be administered.

Before the Snow Falls

Beginning as early as September, the Town of Porter Highway Department begins preparing for the winter months ahead by reviewing snow removal routes, interfacing with school district personnel in regards to bus routes and turn-a-rounds, and servicing maintenance equipment. Preparation and servicing of equipment for the upcoming winter continues through November. November is an extremely critical time, as the equipment used for snow removal operations is used for other things, and our focus can change at very short notice.

The Highway Department's salt storage facility is stockpiled with 1200 tons of de-icing salt. This is mixed with IceBan and salt brine at a ratio of 10 gallons per ton. In order to be properly prepared for inclement weather during the snow season, the Highway Department continually monitors weather conditions. Under certain forecast weather conditions, you will see the trucks putting down an application of salt before the storm. This helps keep the snow or ice from bonding to the pavement.

When the Snowfall Starts

The Town of Porter is split into 6 distinct plowing routes. These plowing routes are designed to avoid overlap of service and to accomplish a complete maintenance cycle in about 3 hours. After a storm event, our plow drivers are called out at 3 a.m. and are typically on the road before 4 a.m. This schedule allows for all roads to be plowed and treated by 7 a.m. For storm events that begin after or during the typical morning drive time, maintenance runs will begin at approximately 12:30 p.m. to allow for school bus routes to be treated before the normal dismissal time. Should precipitation continue, runs will continue until the end of evening commute time. Under most circumstances, all maintenance will end by 7 p.m. Severe weather conditions (i.e. freezing rain/roadway icing) may dictate that maintenance continue after the 7 p.m. end or before the 3 a.m. start time frame for the safety of Highway Department personnel. We have a limited crew, so we try to have an 8-hour break before we head back out on the routes. There is not enough personnel or funding to have 2 shifts. On weekends and holidays, the start times may be different than regular working week days.

It should be understood that unusual situations (i.e. manpower shortages, extreme weather events and mechanical malfunctions) might change these time schedules. Every effort to accomplish these maintenance schedules shall be attempted.

(See COVID-19 Policy on Page 6 for Emergency Plan)

An important step in dealing with snowfall is road salting. Top priority is given to the Town's main roads. Those roads are routes that bear the heaviest year-round traffic and usually are major arteries running north/south or east/west that have double yellow centerlines. School bus routes are also given top priority.

The Town is responsible for State Route 93. Creek Road from Lake Road to Lewiston Line. (Youngstown-Lockport Rd) from Main St. in the Village of Youngstown East to Wilson Line. Lake Road from Creek Road to the Wilson Line. We also provide winter maintenance on all the County roads within the Town boundaries.

The snow removal process starts when frozen precipitation begins falling. Operations initiate with the application of a salt/IceBan/salt brine blend to the roads and continue until the roads are clear or material application is no longer effective due to the depth of the snow.

When the Snowfall Continues

When two or three inches of snow have accumulated and more is expected, snow is more economically removed by plowing rather than salting. Town Highway Department personnel will plow all roads on which the Town of Porter is responsible for performing winter maintenance. Our first responsibility is to open the main roads. These arterials are the key to providing safe access for emergency vehicles as well as maintaining the steady flow of traffic since most residents live within a short distance of such a route. The plows then continue to plow all roads on the route to "open up" each one in sequence. If the storm continues in intensity, the trucks remain in that same pattern until the storm abates. At that time, the trucks begin to "widen out" all roads by pushing the accumulated snow back to behind the ditch line and clearing intersections.

Remember, trained crews work during these storms to keep the roads open and passable. If you wish to report a hazardous condition, call the Highway Department at 716-791-3831. If there is a medical emergency, call 911. To report a non-emergency situation, contact the Niagara County Sheriff's Department Dispatch at 716-438-3393.

After the Storm is Over

Crews continue to monitor all roads for icy spots and areas where winds redeposit the snow in traffic lanes. Usually an application of salt is applied to all roads so the riding surface remains drivable. If the accumulation is particularly heavy, the Town may use larger equipment (i.e. wheel loaders) to clear intersections or areas that have received wind-driven drifts. Crews are also dispatched to clear upstream culvert mouths and catch basins so that melting snow can run off.

You may wish to avoid a potential problem, and also be of assistance to your neighbors, by cleaning off a catch basin, culvert entrance or shoveling out a nearby fire hydrant. *Please avoid creating a hazard by discarding snow from your driveway or sidewalk into the roadway.*

Parking and Travel Regulations

There is no "on road parking" in the Town of Porter from 12 a.m. until 6 a.m. December 1 through April 1. This includes areas adjacent to the road surface (i.e. road shoulders and driveway entrances within the right-of-way). Vehicles parked illegally or abandoned on roads are subject to towing at the owner's expense as well as being ticketed by local law enforcement agencies. As soon as you are aware that bad weather is on the way, make sure your vehicle is off the road. This protects your car from being splashed with slush, becoming plowed in, or being hit by the snowplow or by passing vehicles. Best of all, the snowplow has space to move the snow to.

Mailboxes and Newspaper Boxes

Mail and newspaper boxes placed in the highway right-of-way are allowed there merely as a convenience to the homeowner and the delivery persons. Additionally, an opinion issued by the Attorney General on February 28, 1966, stated, "When the necessity of keeping the highway open conflicts with an individual's reception of the mail, the later must stand aside." While the highway department makes every effort to avoid damaging these structures, it may, at times, be unavoidable. Most mailbox damage is a direct result of snow being cast off the wing, not direct wing/plow contact. In certain situations, at the Highway Superintendent's discretion, a mailbox that has been physically struck by a Town of Porter vehicle may be repaired or replaced by the department. We also have a supply of temporary, free-standing mailboxes that are available for resident's use until you, the home owner, make a permanent repair. The Town will deliver you a temporary free-standing mailbox so you can get your mail, and we will pick it up after you've had a chance to repair or replace your mailbox.

HELPING US HELP YOU

Be prepared, Be Aware and Be Patient

Before it snows, remember last year's problems and try to tackle them in advance. If you do your own snow removal, have your tools and supplies handy. Shovels, snow blowers, calcium chloride, rock salt and sand should be ready before the season begins. If you hire someone to do your snow removal, make those arrangements early. It can be difficult to find someone in the middle of a storm.

Make arrangements to have adequate food supplies on hand. Keep flashlights, a battery powered radio and emergency equipment on hand in case of disruption in the power supply.

Area news media will announce approaching storms and will disseminate information on school closings and meeting cancellations. The Niagara County Sheriff's Department will utilize NY-Alert and Facebook to announce road closing or re-routings.

Please do not go out during or immediately after a snowstorm unless it is truly necessary. Crews have many hours of hard work to complete their snow clearing operations. Less traffic on the road means that we will be able to clear the roads more quickly and completely. Under the best of conditions, it will take us at least 4 hours from the time it stops snowing completely to complete our snow removal operations.

Remember, whether it is your driveway for which you are responsible or the 122.12 miles of roads for which we are responsible, snow removal is an arduous and time consuming task. Please understand that the Highway Department cannot shovel ridges or windows from your driveway entrance, nor can we plow private property.

Tips & Suggestions

When shoveling out the mouth of your driveway, throw it to the right of your driveway as you face the street or "downstream". Throwing or plowing snow in the road is not only illegal, but it can create a patch of snow and ice that freezes over and causes a hazardous condition. Besides, it will only be re-deposited when the plow comes around again.

If at all possible, finish clearing your driveway entrance after the final widening pass has been completed. *Helpful Hint: Leave a strip of snow at the edge of your driveway; this will block some of the snow from entering your driveway when the plow widens the roadway.* The final widening pass is usually completed approximately 8 to 10 hours after the snow stops completely. This, of course, depends on the severity of the storm.

Plan alternate ways and extra time to travel to main routes and to your place of employment. ***Remember - Slow down, brake slowly, and allow plenty of room between you and the vehicle ahead of you!***

During times of reduced visibility, watch for pedestrians, snow removal equipment, and disabled vehicles. Maintain your vehicle properly. Take time to thoroughly clean and defrost your vehicle's windows before "hitting" the highway. Equip your car with snow tires and keep your headlights and taillights clean and on at all times.

COVID-19 Emergency Plan

During this pandemic the local highway departments have comprised a plan in case a highway department should be overrun with COVID-19.

If the Town of Porter should have cases of COVID-19 and the department should have to shut down, the neighboring towns would then step in to open the main roads. The side roads would be opened at a later time when it could be worked into the manpower schedule. If this plan should have to be implemented, please be patient as it may take longer for some of the side roads to be cleared... but they WILL be cleared.

We hope this never happens; but if it should, the Town of Porter is prepared and the service that everyone is accustomed to would change to the attached COVID-19 plan. When picking these main routes, traffic count and giving people access to a plowed road were taken into account. Our hope was that people would only have to travel a short distance on an unplowed road to reach a plowed road.

The plan would take effect, not only if Porter got COVID-19, but also if one of the surrounding towns got COVID-19 as well. We would help them out and Porter's roads would be plowed on the COVID-19 route plan as well. See attached map of COVID-19 plow roads.

This plan has been formed and implemented due to the COVID-19 pandemic but will also be implemented if any emergency should arise in the Town of Porter. This will ensure that the roads within the town remain clear and safe for travel during the winter months during **any** emergency situation.

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