

Snow and Ice Removal Program



Process

The City of Hermiston’s approach to clearing snow and has been built over many years of experience with the local climate and road conditions. The Snow and Ice Removal Program is a tiered approach, which prioritizes main thoroughfares, and flexibly re-allocates resources based on changing weather conditions.

City Crews go in to “Phase 1” Snow & Ice Removal when snow begins to fall, and the storm event is predicted to have an accumulation of 2” or more. Depending on conditions, Crews work their way through Phase 1 and then on to Phase 2, and finally Phase 3. However, if significant snow continues to fall, or conditions worsen, crews will either stay on, or revert back to, Phase 1.

Phases

Phase 1- The #1 goal during this time is to clear and maintain the main traffic routes through the City.

Phase 2- After the main routes are clear, and if accumulation has stopped, crews move into the hill routes and down town commercial areas. Crews continue to monitor the phase one routes to keep them in the best condition possible. During this time city personnel are also deployed to clear municipal buildings, the airport, and during the late night or early morning to public parking lots.

Phase 3- Crews move into the residential areas. Personnel and equipment are dispatched to different locations and all work in a counterclockwise rotation throughout the neighborhoods.

Re-Allocation of Resources & Emergencies

If another storm event begins to put down new snow accumulations while crews are in Phases 2 or 3, they will be re-allocated to Phase 1 routes. Crews may also be pulled away to respond to emergencies such as water line breaks in roadways, motor vehicle collisions, and fires.

Snow & Ice Removal Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Where is the best place to shovel the snow from my driveway and sidewalk?

A: It is a violation of Ordinance to deposit materials in the street. (Chapter 92 and 94 of Hermiston code of Ordinances) The best place to put snow from your driveway and sidewalk is on your lawn or planter areas beside your driveway. Throwing the snow from your driveway or sidewalk into the street creates a situation where when our plowing operation comes by we plow it back into your driveway area creating a larger amount for you to clear again out of your driveway.

Q: Why can't the City remove the snow they plow in front of my driveway?

A: The city's primary goal and duty is to provide safe and open access to the main roadway system. To be fiscally responsible, and in the interest of public safety in a whole, it would not be a feasible undertaking for the City to provide this service.

Q: Why don't you plow to the center of the street?

A: Plowing and piling snow in the center of the street creates a safety hazard. The freeze /thaw cycle creates a bigger challenge when melting snow freezes on the road surface during evening hours. Traffic flow is restricted by eliminating a portion of the driving lane, and it creates sight and obstructions for low ground clearance vehicle.

Q: Can I park my car on the street?

A: Yes, on streets where parking is normally allowed. However, if parked on the street, your car could inadvertently be surrounded with a snow bank following our plowing operations. Maneuvering a snowplow in and out between parked vehicles can be very dangerous, and it is not an efficient way to plow snow. If you have the opportunity to avoid parking in the street, it is greatly appreciated and encouraged.

Q: Can I have the area of the street in front of my house cleared and piled on the street?

A: If you scrape or cause the snow in your parking area of the street to be scraped, Please remove it from the street onto your property,(the lawn area is a great place to put it, as the pile melts it will put moisture into the ground). Piling snow in the parking area and gutter causes safety hazards, sight obstructions and when the thaw begins the piles will restrict the flow to the drain inlets in the street and could cause flooding.

Q: Why did my street not get plowed until it was packed down to the point that it cannot be plowed?

A: It is usually possible to plow all the streets utilizing the City's limited staff and equipment within a couple of days. If we get hit with a second storm and have to return to phase one streets, phase three operation stops until we get caught up again. We do try to pick up where we left off. We have approximately 180 lane miles to plow, depending on the plow it takes two passes to clear one lane.