



Town of Sterling

Department of Public Works

Snow and Ice Control Policy

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish clear guidelines for snow and ice control operations within the Town of Sterling. This policy defines service expectations, operational responsibilities, materials used, and procedures followed to maintain safe travel conditions on Town roadways and at facilities during winter weather events.

2. POLICY STATEMENT

The Town of Sterling is committed to maintaining safe and passable roadways and public facilities during winter weather conditions to the greatest extent reasonably possible. Snow and ice control operations are conducted to support public safety, emergency access, and the orderly movement of vehicle and pedestrian traffic.

While the Town strives to restore roadways to bare and dry pavement as soon as practical following the end of a storm, it is neither feasible nor reasonable to maintain bare pavement continuously during an active winter event. Weather conditions, pavement temperature, traffic volume, storm duration, and other variables significantly affect winter maintenance operations. As such, operational decisions rely on professional judgment and experience.

The Town shall utilize snow and ice control materials responsibly and efficiently, applying only the amount necessary to restore safe travel conditions while minimizing environmental and infrastructure impacts.

3. SCOPE OF SERVICES

Snow and ice control services are provided for the following Town assets and locations:

A. Roadways

- Improved Town roads
- Unimproved Town roads, where conditions allow
- Town and State roadway intersections
- Roads designated for contractor service

B. Parking Areas

- Town Hall
- Library
- Public Works facilities
- Recreation areas
- School properties (contracted, with Town emergency assistance as needed)

C. Emergency Access

- Fire hydrants
- Emergency water access points
- Critical access routes as identified by emergency services

D. Sidewalks

- Designated sidewalks in the Town Center and other priority areas

E. Bus Turnarounds

- School bus turnarounds designated by the Town and school district

4. SERVICE DELIVERY MODEL

Snow and ice control services within the Town of Sterling are provided through a coordinated combination of Town personnel and private contractors.

- **Sterling Department of Public Works (DPW)** employees are responsible for plowing and treating the central portion of the Town, including assigned municipal roads and facilities.
- **Approved private contractors** are responsible for snow and ice control operations in the northern and southern sections of the Town, in accordance with contractual agreements and Town standards.

All operations are conducted concurrently during storm events. Route assignments and service boundaries may be adjusted by the First Selectman or their designee to address changing conditions, emergencies, or operational needs.

5. SNOW AND ICE CONTROL METHODS

A. Mechanical Snow Removal

Plowing is the primary method of snow removal and is the most effective and environmentally responsible approach for clearing roadways. Plowing operations are conducted continuously during snow events and supplemented by material application as necessary.

B. Deicing and Anti-Icing Materials

The Town primarily uses **treated sodium chloride (salt)** to assist with ice control and snow removal. Salt is most effective at temperatures above 20°F, with reduced effectiveness at lower temperatures.

Salt is applied to:

- Reduce bonding between snow and pavement
- Maintain snow in a plowable condition
- Prevent ice and hard-pack formation

Salt is not intended to replace plowing operations.

6. MATERIAL APPLICATION GUIDELINES

Salt application rates vary based on weather conditions, pavement temperature, traffic, and storm characteristics. Typical application rates are as follows:

Conditions	Temperature	Approximate Application Rate
Freezing rain / sleet	Variable	Up to 300 lbs per lane mile
Snow	≥ 20°F	Approximately 250 lbs per lane mile
Snow (critical areas)	< 20°F	Increased rates on hills and intersections

*Actual rates may vary based on field conditions and operator judgment.

All spreading equipment is calibrated regularly to ensure accurate application and minimize waste.

7. OPERATIONAL PRACTICES

- Material application speeds shall be controlled to maintain effective placement, not exceeding 20 mph.
- Initial salt application timing is critical and may occur early in a storm to prevent pavement bonding.
- During freezing rain events, snow or sleet may be left in place temporarily to reduce the formation of glare ice.
- Special attention is given to hills, curves, intersections, and high-risk areas.

8. PLOWING OPERATIONS

- For light snow events or short-duration squalls, plowing may begin immediately.
- For storms exceeding approximately two inches, plowing generally begins after initial accumulation and continues throughout the storm.
- Following storm cessation, a final cleanup pass is conducted, with additional material applied as needed to address residual conditions.

Operations are conducted in a consistent and impartial manner throughout the Town.

9. EMERGENCY RESPONSE

Snow and ice control resources may be redirected to emergency situations only at the direction of the First Selectman or their designee. Immediate roadway obstructions that pose a safety hazard may be addressed without prior authorization.

10. SNOWBANK MANAGEMENT

After significant snowfall or multiple storms, the Town may perform snowbank widening and pushback operations to:

- Create space for future snow storage
- Reduce meltwater runoff and refreeze hazards
- Improve sightlines at intersections and driveways
- Maintain uniform roadway edges

11. DRIVEWAYS

Property owners are responsible for clearing snow from their own driveways. Snow deposited by plowing operations into driveways is unavoidable. Residents are encouraged to delay final driveway cleanup until Town plowing operations are complete.

12. UNIMPROVED ROADS AND BUS TURNAROUNDS

Unimproved roads and bus turnarounds may not be plowed during snowfalls of approximately two inches or less when surfaces are unfrozen, to prevent damage. In such cases, up to two inches of snow may remain.

13. RIGHT-OF-WAY REQUIREMENTS

A. Snow Placement

Placing snow or ice onto Town roadways or rights-of-way by private individuals or contractors is prohibited.

B. Obstructions

Vehicles, equipment, or personal property may not be placed within the Town right-of-way, as such obstructions interfere with snow removal and create safety hazards.

C. Mailboxes

Mailboxes located within the Town right-of-way are the responsibility of the property owner. Damage caused by snow displacement during plowing is not intentional and is generally unavoidable. The Town is not responsible for repair or replacement.

Residents are encouraged to install snow stakes prior to ground freeze to help identify pavement edges. Stakes should be visible, non-obstructive, and placed within the right-of-way as guides only.

14. MATERIALS FOR RESIDENT USE

The Town provides materials for resident use. Each household is entitled to one five-gallon bucket of salt from the salt shed.

15. RESOURCES

Snow and ice control operations are supported by:

- Town of Sterling Public Works equipment
- Full-time and part-time DPW personnel
- Approved contractors

Town vehicles engaged in snow operations are marked and utilize amber and green warning lights. These vehicles have the right-of-way while performing official duties.

16. OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES

Pre-Season

- Inspect and service equipment

- Procure and store materials
- Perform roadside maintenance
- Conduct employee and contractor training

Pre-Storm

- Load equipment
- Inspect drainage infrastructure
- Monitor weather forecasts
- Prepare staffing and supplies

Active Storm

- Execute assigned routes
- Apply materials as needed
- Clear priority areas, hydrants, sidewalks, and parking facilities
- Observe required safety and rest periods

Post-Storm

- Address freeze/refreeze conditions
- Perform equipment maintenance
- Respond to resident concerns as directed by First Selectman

17. POLICY REVIEW

This policy shall be reviewed annually and updated as necessary. Any revisions shall be documented and approved by the Board of Selectmen.

18. COMMUNICATION

This policy shall be distributed to all Town employees and contractors involved in snow and ice control operations. Questions regarding implementation shall be addressed prior to the start of winter operations.

Adopted by: Town of Sterling Board of Selectmen

Effective Date: