

Winter Maintenance Procedure Information

As a response to a few repetitive requests or complaints about our winter road maintenance program in Williams Township, this is meant to inform the public and answer some common concerns.

You were out to treat roads too late. You need to pre-treat!

- We will not throw \$5000 of material on the road before a storm only to have it thrown off by traffic before a storm even arrives. This is NOT pre-treating!
- We do not have the equipment necessary to pre-treat the roads with brine.
- Ideally, snow should start and a little accumulation should occur before the trucks even leave to treat the roads. We use tire chains. Chains on bare roads cause unnecessary wear on the trucks, the chains and the roads alike.
- Salt requires two things to be effective; water in the form of snow, sleet, or freezing rain and heat usually transferred to the road by vehicle tires and undercarriage. Without both of those factors, salt doesn't belong on the road.
- From the time a storm starts until the last road is treated it will be about 2.0 - 2.5 hours. Prepare yourself for those conditions. The responsibility is on you!

I want a plow schedule so I know when I can get out!

- **There isn't one!**
- We have around 70 miles of road, seven guys and seven trucks. We drive 15-18mph. When we plow, 70 miles of road now turns onto 140 miles of normal two lane road. Consider some roads are 30 ft wide and larger with turn lanes. If you see a plow truck go by, you will not see it for another 2 hours at least!
- During heavy snow, all trucks are instructed to stick to the main routes and hills and bypass the roads less travelled. Be prepared for these conditions.
- Trucks will be rerouted to respond to emergency service calls which will delay a plow trucks return. If you needed emergency services, you would appreciate this too.

Why do we use anti-skid? I don't want these stones on my street!

- If we treated different roads with different salt/anti-skid mixtures it would easily take 6-8 hours to treat all roads at the beginning of a storm. Routes are designed to be most efficient and cost effective. A mixture for the storm will be determined and all **Township roads** will be treated accordingly.
- We have no stockpile of clean salt at the Public Works facility. Leftover mixed material from trucks is dumped back into the salt bin. Anti-skid is already in there.
- Salt is to be applied at rates of 500-800 lbs per 2 lane mile. Even less is to be applied during freezing rain conditions. We normally apply it at close to double

the recommended rate due to less traffic and colder road conditions and people still aren't happy. Anti-skid is needed for traffic to get around safely until the salt does its job.

- Anti-skid helps move salt brine on the road as vehicles move it around.

Roads aren't like they use to be during the winter!

- We use to have a lot less roads to take care of in this Township years ago.
- There was a lot less traffic in the Township years ago.
- There were more volunteers to assist with part-time snowplowing years ago.
- How many of the people who think the winter maintenance is worse today than many years ago, remember that roads were completely shut with snow for days or weeks back then? When is the last time there was a road closed because they were impassable? Maybe the personal preparations for winter conditions are not what they use to be! Conditions are better, not worse.
- Roads that clear the fastest in a storm are smooth, well constructed roads that have proper drainage. Most of our roads have no proper roadbed construction. Most of our roads are packed dirt, 2-5 layers of oil/chip seal and a thin asphalt overlay if we are lucky. Improperly constructed roads with the amount of traffic present today has led to a rapid deterioration of poorly constructed roads that this Township can't financially keep up with. Actions of years past have affected the future.

I feel like a prisoner in my own home!

- The questions I most often ask people that call and complain about road conditions is this. "Do you have tire chains, studded tires, or snow tires?" The answer is always no.
- We live in the Northeast United States, which has accumulating snowfall in every winter, and we are a community full of steep hills. Prepare yourself and your vehicle for those conditions.
- No 4X4 vehicle, no tire chains, no studded tires, no snow tires means you have no chance to safely get around anywhere in a storm, especially in this community.
- If you are not going to work then stay home and out of the way of the crews trying to take care of the roads. Delays occur when we have to wait for you to get out of the way for us to do our job!
- Each time you get in a car you are assuming the risks, consciously or not, that are associated with driving a vehicle. Those risks increase during inclement weather. The state will tell you it is not a right to drive a vehicle, it is a privilege and the individual assumes all risks.

Possible reasons for delays in treatment or plowing of the roadways.

- There is no on-call policy that requires all employees to come in for storms. Everyone that works in the department is great about coming in and never refuses. However there are times when unexpected storms catch guys out of town or home

emergencies happen. We are not paid to sit at home all winter and wait for snow. Even one guy missing means a delay somewhere in service.

- Equipment failures occur. We have no mechanic on duty, no extra trucks to use and no extra guys to help fix a truck if broke down.
- Substandard storage facilities increase our response time. Anti-skid sits outside in the weather and freezes which turns it into big chunks we have to break up before loading. Plows and trucks are snow and ice covered which makes it harder to hook up and use equipment.
- New roads taken over means new routes for winter maintenance. All routes had to be redone for 2008/2009 due to the dedication of seven new roads to the Township. It takes up to a full winter season for all employees to learn all of the nuances of these new routes and to become most efficient.
- If we keep getting roads dedicated to us without adding new employees or equipment it will obviously take longer to service everyone.
- New employees need to be trained for how we do snow and ice removal. We had 2 employees new to our winter maintenance procedures in 2009. In a perfect environment someone would go with a new employee during a storm and provide them with the knowledge and tips needed to be efficient. We had no one to do this because everyone had a route. They have in essence had to train themselves and have done a great job doing so.

People that live or pass through this Township need to help us help everyone, by helping themselves! Visit other municipalities in the area that are rural like we are and you will learn to appreciate how good our roads are. Some places don't even put a plow on until the storm is completely over and then they go to work and clear the snow. Would that type of service be acceptable?

Please remember, we have no second shift to relieve us. The longer the storm, the more tired we are. We need breaks for safety reasons. The more tired we are the more possible damage will occur out there. Mailboxes hit, yards plowed up, or even worse...accidents. If things like these do occur, maybe it isn't because we aren't trained and competent. Maybe it is because we have been up for the last 36 hours straight to keep everyone in the general public as safe as possible.

We will not be out on the roads plowing and treating nonstop day and night! School buses and rush hours will be tended to and breaks will be taken! We all need to learn to drive responsibly for conditions and to be responsible for ourselves and others safety.