

Snow Removal Program

Bowen Island Municipality has performed its own winter maintenance operations, including snow removal since November 2007.

Equipment

The Municipality has the following equipment that can be deployed for snow and ice clearing:

- 2 - 4WD, 1 Ton trucks fitted with salter/plough combinations
- 2 - 5 Ton truck fitted with salter/plough combinations
- 1 - Bobcat fitted with loader and grader attachments
- Limited locally contracted backhoes, and miscellaneous equipment as required



One of our 4WD, 1 Ton trucks fitted with salter/plough combination

Snow & Ice Control Strategy

Snow removal generally begins as soon as it is practical after a storm. A number of elements, including the following, are taken into consideration before snow removal operations are initiated:

- Public safety
- Emergency access routes
- Public Transit routes
- Street parking requirements
- Snow storage capability
- Vehicle and pedestrian traffic

Street salting and/or sanding is the first step in the winter control plan. Salt and/or sand provides traction for traffic until snow has reached a minimum depth. Once the minimum depth of snow is exceeded, ploughing activities are initiated, and streets are cleaned according to their importance in the overall transportation system. Different ploughing strategies may be used depending on the density, consistency and temperature of the snow, the snowfall rate, the road condition and the weather forecast. Sometimes, the ploughs will consciously leave the lower inch or so of snow in place, in order to leave the asphalt below with a salt layer on it – this prevents hard packing of snow on the asphalt.

Ploughing Priorities

To maintain a fair level of service it is our policy to initiate snow ploughing using different snow accumulation thresholds for different road types.

Primary Routes: Ploughing begins as soon as possible.

Secondary Routes: Ploughing begins after Primary routes are passable.

Tertiary Routes: Ploughing begins after primary and secondary routes are passable. In some cases, safety concerns in snow and ice conditions may limit ploughing until the end of the snow storm and during daylight hours.

Dangerous Routes Ploughing occurs only under the discretion of the Manager of Engineering & Operations.

Municipal parking lots: Ploughing to occur as required.

Un-maintained roads: Ploughing will not occur.

Sidewalks

Sidewalk clearing in the Snug Cove Business Area is the responsibility of the abutting property owner (Bylaw 133). Business property owners are required to clear snow and ice from the sidewalks that surround their property by 10 a.m.

Public Responsibilities

Despite the best efforts of a highly motivated crew, conditions can deteriorate and roads can become treacherous. In such conditions, motorists are advised NOT TO travel. If travel is necessary, motorists are advised to take public transit. If you decide to drive, your vehicle must have winter tires and should be fitted with chains.

Plough crews have a priority sequence, and have a big-picture understanding of the snow conditions across the whole island. Drivers are instructed NOT to entertain personal requests for people's roads to be ploughed first – Do not follow around plough trucks or stop crews to speak with them.

Cul-de-sacs and dead-ends with a short turning radius make it difficult for plough trucks to maneuver. Please do not park or store materials in these areas.

When shoveling your driveway, you are instructed NOT to place snow onto the Municipal Highway. Please pile snow on the left side of your driveway (oriented if you are facing your property). This will improve visibility of approaching traffic and will reduce the possibility of snow being pushed across your driveway by plough trucks.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q – Does the Municipality regularly salt the roads to keep them free of ice?

A – Yes, when freezing conditions are expected a vehicle will salt the roads beginning at 3:30 am, Monday to Saturday (and beginning at 4:30 am, Sunday and Holidays).

Q – Does the Municipality have a Snow & Ice Control Procedure?

A – Before a snow fall, the roads will be pre-salted to help prevent hard packing of snow on the asphalt. During a snow fall, the first priority for the ploughs is to clear snow from all main roads and bus routes. The trucks will continue to clear and maintain the roads on a 24 hour basis during the snow storm.

Q – Why isn't my road being cleared?

A – Plough operators are instructed to maintain primary roads first and only clear secondary roads after the primary roads have been cleared. Tertiary roads are not likely to be cleared. If snow falls again before all clearing is complete, crews must then return to streets with a higher priority. Understandably, this lengthens the response time to residential roads and is the prime cause of inquiries on snow control.

Q – What is the basis of the plough route priorities?

A – Plough route priorities have been created to allow crews to focus their effort on specific routes that are considered more critical than others.

1) Primary route - main roads and transit routes.

2) Secondary route – roads that are relatively close to a main route or roads that may be beyond the capabilities of the crew to keep clear during a heavy or long duration snow storm.

3) Tertiary route – roads that have safety concerns associated with them during snow & ice conditions and roads that service relatively few homes.

4) Dangerous route – roads with steep gradients or other road characteristics that have been identified as potentially hazardous.

Q – Does the Municipality use sand?

A – Yes. The Municipality typically supplies a sand/salt mixture to the road surface to provide immediate traction until the salt begins to reach.