



CITY OF PROVIDENCE

9.4 WINTER OPERATIONS POLICY

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to delineate the staffing, equipment and process utilized in order to provide for efficient and reliable winter operations for plowing, salting, and inspecting of City streets and city-owned sidewalks. Snow removal operations for the City of Providence are multi-faceted. This policy will describe in general terms each part of the operation.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees, applicants, contractors, and volunteers associated with the City of Providence's winter operations.

Nothing in this policy shall supersede, modify, or diminish any rights, benefits, or obligations contained within applicable collective bargaining agreements (CBAs) or laws. In the event of a conflict between this policy and a CBA, the CBA shall prevail for covered employees. For all other employees not covered by a CBA, this policy shall govern.

Definitions

DPW Director and/or Deputy Director: Responsible for overall leadership of all staff engaged in the snow event. Engaged in emergency preparedness calls with the Providence Emergency Management Agency (PEMA), stationed in Snow Operations Center during snow event, consults and communicates with City's Chief Operating Officer and the DPW Highway Superintendent throughout the snow event.

Superintendent of the DPW Highway Division: Responsible for overall supervision of all snow removal personnel and equipment. In conjunction with DPW Director and/or Deputy Director, determines beginning and end of snow removal operation and staffing needs. Assigns drivers and Inspectors to specific sectors within the City. During the winter/snow season, it is the responsibility of the Highway Superintendent/Deputy Superintendent to monitor weather forecasts for potential winter storms and be prepared to activate resources in a timely manner to respond effectively.

Deputy Superintendent of the DPW Highway Division: Provides support to Highway Superintendent in all aspects of snow removal operation. Responsible for notification of activation of snow operations via automated notification system. May serve as Inspector Supervisor when needed.

Vendor Managers: DPW employees, stationed in Snow Operations Center during snow event, responsible for recruitment, verification of credentials and vehicles, and all oversight of snow removal vendors, as well as administrative duties related to time-tracking and payment for vendors, food ordering and distribution, and related duties.

Inspector Manager: DPW employee, stationed in Snow Operations Center during snow event, responsible for recruitment and all oversight of Inspectors and Inspector Supervisors

City Snowplow driver: Responsible for the operation of a City-owned or leased 6-wheeler, 10-wheeler, pickup, landscaper, with and without material spreaders, in assigned sector within the City. Other DPW employees, such as laborers, may perform other snow removal duties such as shoveling or sanding walkways or City lots.

Materials distribution: Heavy Equipment operator, stationed at City's materials depot, responsible for loading materials in spreaders throughout the snow event.

Vendor: Responsible for the operation of vendor-owned snowplow/spreader equipment for compensation per City Purchasing agreement, in assigned sector within the City.



CITY OF PROVIDENCE

Inspector: City employee charged with monitoring the quality and efficiency of personnel, equipment, and vendors engaged in snow removal.

NOTE: Inspectors with plowing experience and interest may be permitted to operate a snowplow vehicle in order to remove snow while engaging as an Inspector, subject to the discretion of the Highway Superintendent.

Inspector Supervisor: City employee charged with training, monitoring and assisting Inspectors.

Snow Operations Center: Located in DPW administrative building during snow event. Check-in site for vendors and Inspectors/Inspector Supervisors, hub for PPD officers in event of a parking ban, and central communications center for storm management.

Policy

All employees engaged in winter operations are valuable contributors to a team dedicated to the demanding task of keeping the City safe and passable during storms. To accomplish our objectives, the following outlines what is expected of personnel in the Department of Public Works (DPW) and other City departments participating in winter operations

1. Snow Removal Operations

- A. Snow removal is accomplished by the DPW and Parks Department, utilizing City-owned as well as leased vehicles and equipment, and contracted vendors.
- B. No employee may leave their assigned vehicle or route for any reason without notifying their Inspector, the Highway Superintendent, and/or dispatcher. The employee must notify their inspector and/or dispatcher promptly upon returning to their vehicle or route.
- C. The priority order for snow removal on City streets is as follows:
 1. Mains
 2. Hills
 3. Hospitals
 4. Secondaries
- D. The priority for snow removal for bike paths, sidewalks, and bridges will also be based on location, adjacent streets and bus stop location.
- E. All employees designated for winter operations who possess a CDL must be able to operate all available equipment for which the employee has been provided training, including vehicles with standard transmission.

2. Inspector & Supervisor Guidelines

- A. Employees who sign up for winter operations must be available for each storm, subject to first fulfilling the needs of their own department.
- B. Employees who refuse two consecutive shifts will not be called during the next snow event.
- C. Inspectors and supervisors will be issued reflective safety vests for use during a storm; these must be worn.
- D. Two-way radios will be issued and used by all personnel working the snow event.
 1. All personnel are expected to keep their supervisors informed of any incidents, concerns or if they are taking a break.
- E. Vehicles will be provided for use by Inspectors and Supervisors, as well as procedure for re-fueling.
 1. All Inspectors and Supervisors are responsible for compliance with the City's Vehicle Use Policy.



CITY OF PROVIDENCE

- F. Inspectors are assigned to specific Wards, as are DPW and vendor plows.
 - 1. Inspectors must be present in their Wards at all times, monitoring the effectiveness of the snow removal in that Ward and communicating with the Inspector Manager regarding any issues or questions.
 - G. DPW employees assigned to the Highway and Sewer divisions, as well as those who sign up to perform Inspector roles or work in the Snow Operations Center, are expected to be available for each storm.
 - 1. There will be no exceptions to this policy, barring personal illness, family emergency, approved leave, or other extenuating circumstances, and only with the approval of the Director or designee.
 - H. Vacation time during snow season (November 15th to April 15th) will be limited in accordance with departmental policies for requesting time off.
 - 1. If at all possible, staff should refrain from planning vacation time during snow season.
 - 2. DPW requests must be vetted with their division supervisor, who will consult with the Director or Deputy Director.
 - 3. Vacation requests during snow season must comply with the "Snow Season Vacation SOP for DPW staff."
 - I. Winter Ops Call-in Order
 - 1. DPW personnel will be called first for any winter operation events.
 - 2. Parks Department employees are called in at the same time as DPW personnel to plow city parks and Ward 9.
 - 3. Additionally, in order to have sufficient Commercial Driver's License (CDL) drivers to operate the city's large plow trucks, additional Park Department CDL equipment operators will be called in as part of the core DPW plow crew.
 - J. If additional employees are needed to provide the desired level of coverage as determined by the management team, qualified personnel from other city departments will be contacted in order of seniority.
 - 1. In cases where employees from other city departments are called to supplement or replace core DPW snowplow operators, and those same employees are required to report to their normal place of work at the normally scheduled time, the employees can only accept the offer to work overtime hours for DPW if their normally scheduled shift at their parent department begins seven (7) or more hours after they are asked to report to DPW.
 - 2. For each storm, DPW management has the right to waive this requirement to a lower number of hours as long as the criteria used is exercised consistently to all employees called according to seniority.
3. **Notification Process**
- A. All personnel are responsible for furnishing the Highway Superintendent with a phone number and email address for off-hours contact at the beginning of the snow season and updating it as necessary.
 - 1. Personnel must provide the phone number that serves as the primary contact number for the season.
 - 2. If there are any changes to an employee's contact information or license, the employee is responsible for promptly providing the updated information to the Highway Superintendent and the Department of People and Culture (DPC).
 - 3. It is the employee's duty to respond.
 - B. Employees will be notified of being called in for snow operations via call or text.



CITY OF PROVIDENCE

1. Employees must return a call within ten (10) minutes of receipt, or the shift opportunity will be offered to the next employee on the seniority list.
 2. Employees who do not respond to a call to their primary number within the stated time will be considered to have refused a shift, unless a reason is provided that is acceptable to the Highway Superintendent, in consultation with the DPW Director.
 3. If an employee knows in advance of a reason that would prevent them from being available for an approaching winter event, it is the employee's obligation to notify the Highway Superintendent that they will be unavailable. See the Winter Operations Protocol for more information.
4. **Snow Event**
- A. During the winter/snow season, it is the responsibility of the Highway Superintendent/Deputy Superintendent, DPW, and PEMA to monitor weather forecasts for potential winter storms and be prepared to activate resources in a timely manner to respond effectively.
 - B. When a winter storm is forecasted to be of considerable impact to the City and its operations, it will convene the Emergency Advisory Board (EAB). See the Adverse Weather Policy and PEMA Emergency Action Plans for more information.
 1. When a winter storm is forecasted to be at least three (3) inches of snow or more, the DPW Director/Deputy Director will call a meeting of snow management staff prior to the snow event to plan the storm response.
 2. Designated staff notify staff, the private Vendors and Inspectors using the contracted automatic notification system.
 3. Vendors and Inspectors have 10 minutes to respond to the notification and advise DPW how many trucks will be present for that storm.
 4. The DPW Director/Deputy Director, in consultation with the Highway Superintendent, will determine when the snow event ends.
 5. See the *Winter Operations SOP* for information regarding timecards, ward maps, procurement processes and vendor management.
5. **Compliance**
- The success of service to the City and its residents during winter/snow events are incumbent upon compliance, cooperation, and teamwork of employees and vendors as identified in this policy and its respective protocols and operating procedures. Individuals found in violation of their duties applicable to winter operations may be subjected to corrective and/or disciplinary action including the removal of service to winter operations, up to and including termination.

Related Policies:

Winter Operations Protocol
License Verification Policy
Adverse Weather Policy
Emergency Staffing Policy
Vehicle Use Policy