Snow Removal Procedure

Overview

With the advent of each Minnesota snow season comes the concerns about access to work, school and business. The safety and convenience of the traveling public is a main concern of the Lac qui Parle County Highway Department. The goal of the County Highway Department is to have all County Roads passable within a reasonable amount of time after a snowfall and/or wind has stopped.

THE COUNTY DOES NOT ASSURE A COMPLETELY BARE ROAD AND WILL NOT SAND ENTIRE SECTIONS OF ROADWAY. USERS OF THE ROADWAY SYSTEM ARE REMINDED TO EXERCISE CAUTION AND DRIVE WITH CARE.

THE LEGAL SPEED LIMIT MAY NOT BE POSSIBLE AT ALL TIMES.

Commencing of Snow Removal

The County Highway Department will usually not dispatch the snowplows until after the snowfall and/or wind has stopped. During extended periods of snowfall and/or wind, exceptions may be made. The snowplows will not be sent out in situations that may be hazardous due to restricted visibility. The County Highway Department will apply snow control measures when snowfall and/or drifting exceeds two inches in depth. Snowfall of less than two inches may not be plowed.

If snowfall and/or wind stop during regular working hours, the equipment may be dispatched at that time. If snowfall and/or wind stop during the night or early morning hours, every effort will be made to have the plows on the road by 5:00 a.m. Weekend operation will be handled in a similar fashion.

Snow Removal Operation

Generally, snow removal will consist of three phases; making the road passable, widening and sanding, and cleaning up. Dependent upon the situation, more than one phase may be accomplished at one time. Main priority will be the paved county roadways, the gravel roads may not be plowed all the time and Level C gravel roads will only be plowed as time permits. Plowing of gravel roads will be based on amount and type of snow.

A. Make Roads Passable

Clean one lane in each direction. Generally plow and wing are used.

B. Widen the Lanes to edge of Shoulder

Sanding is done at problem locations on paved roads including intersections, curves and hills.

An 8-10% salt to sand mixture is used for regular sanding. More salt may be added to the mixture for problem areas. At temperatures below +20 degrees and high winds, slip sand use will be limited, as it becomes ineffective.
C. Clean Up

Removal of slush off the roadway, clean up areas were snow has drifted back in and widened out intersections.

Personal Property

Mailboxes, fences, and other personal property damaged will be evaluated case by case. Only those personal property items that were properly located and installed, and which were damaged by actual contact with County equipment will be repaired at county expense. (See Mailboxes & Newspaper Boxes along Roadway Policy)

As snow is plowed from the roadways, operators leave as little snow across driveways as possible. County removal of this windrow is infeasible and remains the property owner responsibility.

Residents are reminded that IT IS UNLAWFUL to plow snow from driveways onto or across public roads, and any person convicted of such violation shall be guilty of a misdemeanor (see Attachment A). Piles of snow left on or near the road can freeze into a solid mass creating a hazardous situation for vehicles and snowplows. Accidents and damages that are caused by snow piles placed in the roadway may result in liability to the property owner. Also piles of snow increase the chances of drifting snow onto the roadways.

Residents are reminded to remove parked vehicles from county roads until after plowing operations are completed.

The County Highway Department may assist stranded motorists by contacting law enforcement/emergency personnel. The County Highway Department WILL NOT ATTEMPT TO REMOVE ANY STUCK VEHICLES from ditches, snow banks, or any other impediment.

The County Highway Department will make reasonable emergency plowing effort on any route, public or private, if so ordered by the County Sheriff Department. The County Sheriff Department will coordinate operations with ambulance and fire units. The County Sheriff Department will dispatch equipment on a priority basis. All emergencies should be called to the County Sheriff Department on the 911-phone system.

Sidewalks

Sidewalks on county roads within municipalities are the responsibility of the municipalities, just as any other public utility. Policy of individual municipalities regarding sidewalk snow removal may vary between municipalities.

Information

Questions and/or concerns regarding local snow removal and/or conditions should be directed to the local County Highway Shop or if no answer, call County Highway Department in Madison at (320) 598-3878. Local radio station should be monitored for information on road conditions. All emergencies should be called to the County Sheriff Department on 911-phone system.