

Winter Maintenance Policy

GENERAL

The purpose of the Pend Oreille County Winter Maintenance Policy is to provide the priorities and procedures used to remove snow and ice on Pend Oreille County roads. The goal of this policy is to create safe and passable roads within a reasonable period recognizing that each winter storm has its unique characteristics. This policy also serves as a guide to the Road District Foreman, or their designee, to make decisions as to when to deploy snow removal equipment.

Strict adherence to this policy does not guarantee dry, bare pavements or gravel surfaces and it should not be expected that these conditions will exist after a winter storm event. The Pend Oreille County Public Works Department will endeavor to maintain adequate traction for vehicles properly equipped for winter driving conditions.

The Pend Oreille County Public Works Department sands and snowplows about 480 miles of maintained County Roads from three maintenance facilities: Newport (D1), Usk (D2) and Lone (D3).

BASIS OF POLICY

Certain roads in the County have a greater volume of traffic and require a higher priority for maintenance to serve the users. The concern of safety, general welfare, and duration of travel necessitate that priority be given to certain roads. However, in order to provide efficient operations, it may be necessary to partially complete a lower priority road to reach a road of higher priority. Snow and ice removal should generally be based on the following priority:

Priority 1 - Roads with a functional classification of major collector and school bus routes.

Priority 2 - Roads with a functional classification of minor collector.

Priority 3 - All other roads normally given snow and ice control.

Unless otherwise assigned, equipment and personnel will perform snow and ice control first on Priority 1 roads on a county-wide basis. As conditions and time permit, plowing of Priority 2 roads will follow, and so on until all roads normally plowed can be used.

In addition, Pend Oreille County has identified and assigned a snow removal priority number (1-4) for each County road. Level 1 represents the highest priority, level 3 is the lowest priority, level 4 identifies those roads with no County provided snow and ice control.

Emergencies such as power outages, ambulance calls, fires, etc. may take precedence over all other established maintenance routines.

SERVICE OBJECTIVES

Routine/Daily Service - Winter maintenance activities following an overnight storm occurring during the week will commence generally at 6:00 AM. Winter maintenance activities for minor collectors will be accomplished following completion of maintenance on major collectors and school bus routes.

Road crews work a single, 8–10 hour shift Monday – Friday. After hours, weekends, and holidays are on an as needed callout basis for evening or weekend storms.

Weekend/Evening Service - Should an evening or weekend storm occur, a partial crew may be mobilized, if conditions warrant, to provide winter maintenance service on major collector and minor collector roads only. Service to all other roadways will be accomplished during normal workweek time periods.

Accident or Emergency Service - At the request of a Law Enforcement Officer directly or through the Emergency Dispatch Center, a partial crew will be dispatched by the Public Works Department at any time to the scene of an accident or emergency to facilitate safe traffic flow on a county road.

SNOW REMOVAL

Pend Oreille County's snow removal shall provide the following minimum levels of service.

Based on the judgement of the Road District Foreman, snow removal on major collector and minor collector roads shall begin when accumulation has reached a condition where it inhibits traffic flow or is starting to compact on paved roads.

Based on the judgement of the Road District Foreman, snow removal on all other roads normally given snow and ice control shall commence after an accumulation of snow which inhibits travel. Conditions such as wheel track buildup or drifting snow may warrant special consideration for variations in this policy as determined by the Road District Foreman.

The Department shall endeavor to have Priority 1 roads passable to traffic within twelve (12) hours; Priority 2 roads passable to traffic within (24) hours; and Priority 3 roads passable to traffic within 72 hours after an average or normal snowstorm subsides. However, in the event of a heavy or extended period of snowy weather, the County may require more time to make roads passable. Time to open roads to travel is always subject to unforeseeable conditions such as fallen trees and equipment breakdowns. Weather and road conditions can change rapidly in Pend Oreille County. Drivers must anticipate the possibility of slick road conditions and adjust their driving accordingly.

The Road District Foreman shall make the decision to deploy snow removal equipment. Likewise, Road District Foreman may recall snow removal equipment because of adverse conditions which may endanger the employee's safety; or when the existing conditions are such that the efforts are no longer effective and risking the safety of the traveling public. They shall also be responsible for revising work schedules during the week and weekends to achieve the maximum amount of efficiency. In the case of an absence a designee of the Road District Foreman will make the decision to deploy snow and ice control measures.

The Public Works Department shall also be available to assist in any emergency on public or private roads when requested to do so by the County Sheriff's Department.

Intersections that have restricted visibility due to snow piles will be cleared of the obstructions during normal work schedules and when weather conditions permit.

Residents who remove snow from their driveways or sidewalks are reminded that State Law prohibits placing snow or ice on any public road or sidewalk in a manner that impedes vehicle or pedestrian traffic or makes it unsafe.

No parking of vehicles is allowed within the County right of way. Vehicles which are found parked within the County right of way during snow plowing operations may be bermed in. It will be the responsibility of the vehicle driver to shovel the vehicle out. Law enforcement will be notified to tow the vehicle if the vehicle is creating a traffic hazard.

SANDING

Sanding operations shall provide the following levels of service:

- Controlled intersections, curves, and hills shall be sanded
- Sanding operations will generally commence at 6:00 AM. Weather conditions, (such as black ice or freezing rain), may dictate an earlier starting time. During these conditions, actual starting times will be determined by the Road District Foreman.
- Sanding on straight/flat segments of County roads will be done only during icy conditions as determined by the Road Crews or Road District Foreman. Conditions to be considered would be long stretches of very slippery snowpack which may warrant a light application of sand to provide a measure of intermittent skid resistance.
- Sanding within low volume, slow speed subdivision roads, will be done only during icy conditions as determined by the Road Crews or Road District Foreman. Conditions to be considered would be very slippery snowpack which may warrant a light application of sand to provide a small measure of intermittent skid resistance.

DAMAGES

Mailboxes - The Public Works Department will replace a damaged mailbox only if the damaged mailbox was properly located and positioned within the Counties right of way and was physically struck by snow removal equipment. The County will evaluate each damaged mailbox on a case-by-case basis and will, upon its sole discretion, provide and install a standard mailbox with support.

Driveways- The Public Works Department assumes no responsibility for the removal of snow deposited in driveways because of snow plowing. It is not practical to change the plow blade angle to avoid driveways. A snow berm may be deposited both during the initial plowing phase, and again during widening and mop up operations. Exact times cannot be provided on when individual roads will be plowed.

Turf/Landscaping- Landscaping and lawns, including but not limited to; shrubs, trees, inanimate objects, etc. installed by a property owner within the county easement will be the responsibility of the owner and

the owner assumes all risk of damage to such items. Furthermore, the County cannot reasonably control the drift or discharge of snow and/or shoulder materials from the snowplow into ditches and lawns and asphalt driveways. The County will not be responsible for the removal/repair of any shrubs, yard ornamentation, and turf, landscaping, or fences, should materials inadvertently cast into adjacent lawn areas by the plow.

Stranded/Blocking Vehicles - Employees will try to assist the occupants of a stalled or stranded vehicle by contacting Pend Oreille Public Works Office by radio. As a matter of common practice, County equipment should not be used to push or pull a privately-owned vehicle unless specifically authorized by the Director and/or his/her designee. County equipment can be used to move a vehicle that is creating a safety or traffic hazard to a point where the hazard is removed.

Garbage cans shall be placed at least ten feet inside driveway from the roadway shoulder.

Snow from resident's property should not be stacked over the ends of culverts or drainage structures.

Adding a road to the County Winter Maintenance Program:

- 1) The road must be an adopted County Road and funds must be available.
- 2) The road must provide access to three or more full-time winter resident homes or a combination of businesses and full-time winter resident homes.
- 3) Mailboxes installed along the County road must meet current adopted standards.
- 4) The County road must have accommodations at the end of the road to safely turn around snow removal equipment.
- 5) Landscaping within the County right of way must be removed; this includes trees; shrubs; and inanimate objects placed by an adjacent landowner.
- 6) The County Engineer will notify all property owners who own property along the road of the request to add their road to the County's Winter Maintenance Program.
- 7) The County Engineer will prepare a report for the BOCC's review and consideration of the request.
- 8) The BOCC will make the final determination as to whether to add a road to the County Winter Maintenance Program based on all available information including available funding.

Removing a road from the County Winter Maintenance Program:

- 1) The County Engineer or the Public Works Director must review and make a recommendation to remove the road from the Winter Maintenance Program based on one or more of the following criteria:
 - a. The road serves less than three homes.
 - b. Or the road has less than three full-time winter residences and no businesses.
 - c. Or, the road provides redundant access, (non-essential)
 - d. And the road is not designated as a school bus route.
- 2) The BOCC will make the final determination as to whether to remove a road from the County Winter Maintenance Program.

Yearly Review of County Winter Maintenance Program:

Each year in September the County Winter Maintenance Program shall be reviewed. Plow routes shall be evaluated for effectiveness. New school bus routes shall be solicited from the School Districts to coordinate coverage.

A public meeting will be held in the first week of October for Winter Maintenance Policy information. Contact information shall be updated and made available.