

City of Vancouver Snow and Ice Treatment Policy

Effective Date: March 31, 2021

Generally

1. The City of Vancouver (the “City”) conducts Snow and Ice Treatment Operations annually on the Street System. This policy is necessary to clearly establish the priorities of Snow and Ice Treatment Operations and to set out when the City will initiate and continue such operations.
2. Effective Snow and Ice Treatment Operations are necessary to allow the City to function under typical winter weather conditions and to provide winter mobility on City infrastructure.
3. This policy has been created so that Snow and Ice Treatment Operations can be accomplished within the City’s budgetary constraints for such operations combined with other factors including the availability of City personnel, the availability of equipment, traffic volume, road classification, road geometrics, terrain, bus routes and emergency services routes.
4. The intent of this policy is to maintain the Street System in such a manner so as to:
 - a) facilitate the operation of public transit vehicles as well as emergency vehicles providing fire, police, and emergency medical services;
 - b) provide the prudent pedestrian, cyclist, and motorist with a reasonable travel surface during periods of snow accumulation and/or Icy Conditions in keeping with the City’s transportation hierarchy; and
 - c) maintain travelling surfaces within the City so as to minimize economic loss to the community.
5. This is not a bare pavement policy. The City does not guarantee that any part of the Street System will be free from snow and/or ice, prior to, during, or after Snow and Ice Treatment Operations have been initiated or completed.

Terms Referenced in Policy:

“City Engineer” means City Engineer or designate.

“Frost” means a thin covering of ice crystals or particles which forms on a surface from moisture in the air.

“Icy Conditions” means a solid covering of frozen water in patches, sheets or stretches, and does not include Frost.

“Manual” means the City’s Snow and Ice Treatment Operations Manual, as amended from time to time.

“Travel Area” means the portion of a street, improved, designed or intended for motor vehicle or bicycle use.

“Snow Fall Event” means the period of time during which snowfall or snow precipitation is continuous, intermittent, showery, or flurry-like, ending when there is no snowfall or snow precipitation for one hour.

“Snow and Ice Treatment Operations” means one or more of the following: salting, sanding, ploughing, snow-blowing, manual clearing, brining, and/or other activities deemed to be appropriate in the circumstances by the City Engineer.

“Street System” means City-owned public roads, highways, bridges, viaducts, lanes and sidewalks, and any other ways normally open to the use of the public, but does not include private rights-of-way on private property.

Priority Ratings:

6. Snow and Ice Treatment Operations will only be conducted at the following priority locations according to the priority ratings set out below:

“First Priority Locations” consist of the areas and/or routes identified, listed and/or described as such in the Manual.

“Second Priority Locations” consist of the areas and/or routes identified, listed and/or described as such in the Manual.

“Third Priority Locations” consist of the areas and/or routes identified, listed and/or described as such in the Manual.

“Excluded Locations” consist of the areas and/or routes not identified listed and/or described in the Manual as First Priority Locations, Second Priority Locations or Third Priority Locations.

Initiation:

7. The City will, as specified under the heading “Priority Ratings”, initiate Snow and Ice Treatment Operations within 24 hours after the weather forecasting agency described in the Manual predicts that, within this 24-hour period, there will be:
 - a) accumulations of snow on the Travel Area on City-owned public roads, highways, bridges or viaducts, and these accumulations will not self-resolve within the same 24-hour period; and/or

- b) Icy Conditions on the Travel Area on City-owned public roads, highways, bridges or viaducts, and these conditions will not self-resolve within the same 24-hour period.
8. The City will first initiate Snow and Ice Treatment Operations at First Priority Locations:
- a) In circumstances where accumulations of snow have been forecasted in accordance with this policy, the City will treat all First Priority Locations with Snow and Ice Treatment Operations within 12 hours from the end of a Snow Fall Event. Any new Snow Fall Event occurring during such 12-hour period restarts the 12-hour period for completion of Snow and Ice Treatment Operations.
 - b) In circumstances where Icy Conditions have been forecasted in accordance with this policy, the City will treat all First Priority Locations with Snow and Ice Treatment Operations as resources and weather conditions allow.
9. The City will initiate Snow and Ice Treatment Operations at Second Priority Locations at any time after Snow and Ice Treatment Operations have been initiated at First Priority Locations:
- a) In circumstances where accumulations of snow have been forecasted in accordance with this policy, the City will treat all Second Priority Locations with Snow and Ice Treatment Operations within 72 hours from the end of a Snow Fall Event. Any new Snow Fall Event occurring during such 72-hour period restarts the 72-hour period for completion of Snow and Ice Treatment Operations.
 - b) In circumstances where Icy Conditions have been forecasted in accordance with this policy, the City will treat all Second Priority Locations with Snow and Ice Treatment Operations as resources and weather conditions allow.
10. The City may, as resources and weather conditions allow, initiate Snow and Ice Treatment Operations at Third Priority Locations, at any time after Snow and Ice Treatment Operations have been initiated at all First Priority Locations and all Second Priority Locations:
- a) In circumstances where accumulations of snow have been forecasted in accordance with this policy, the City will treat all Third Priority Locations with Snow and Ice Treatment Operations within 15 days from the end of a Snow Fall Event. Any new Snow Fall Event occurring during such 15-day period restarts the 15-day period for completion of Snow and Ice Treatment Operations.
 - b) In circumstances where Icy Conditions have been forecasted in accordance with this policy, the City will treat all Third Priority Locations with Snow and Ice Treatment Operations as resources and weather conditions allow.
11. The City will not undertake Snow and Ice Treatment Operations at Excluded Locations.

Limitation of Service:

12. When carrying out the Snow and Ice Treatment Operations set out in this policy, the City will not:

- a) place additional signs warning of impaired sight distances, reduced visibility, road blocks, or one-lane conditions; and/or
- b) place additional signs warning that any part of the Street System maybe slippery or otherwise hazardous;

except for those parts of the Street System identified in the Manual as those requiring closure.

Procedures:

13. The procedures necessary to implement this policy are set out in the Manual.

Departure from Policy:

14. The City acknowledges that conditions may be so unusual or unexpected that departure from this policy may be required. In such circumstances, the City Engineer may order a departure from this policy.

15. The order to depart from this policy may include, but is not limited to:

- a) temporarily changing the priorities set out in this policy;
- b) temporarily changing the initiation time set out in this policy;
- c) temporarily suspending part or all Snow and Ice Treatment Operations;
- d) temporarily barricading any part of the Street System; and/or
- e) temporarily conducting Snow and Ice Treatment Operations at any one or more Excluded Locations.

16. In circumstances where an order to depart from this policy is made, the City will begin acting on such an order within 48 hours.

17. This policy supersedes all previous written and unwritten policies of the City regarding Snow and Ice Treatment Operations.

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