

MCHENRY COUNTY DIVISION OF TRANSPORTATION



SNOW AND ICE POLICY

Adopted by the McHenry County Board:

November 3, 2015

INTRODUCTION

The McHenry County Division of Transportation (M C D O T) has sole responsibility for the removal of snow and ice on the County's 220 centerline miles and 522 lane miles of highways. This system varies from rural highway with traffic volumes of less than 500 vehicles per day to five lane urban highways with traffic volumes in excess of 45,000 vehicles per day.

Snow and ice removal is considered emergency work in that highways must be cleared any time of the day or night to provide for the safe transportation of people and goods, especially emergency services such as rescue, police, and fire. The MCDOT strives to keep roads clear of snow and ice using the least amount of resources possible. Careful planning and preparation must be done prior to and throughout the snow and ice season for two primary reasons:

1. The potential hazard to the motoring public associated with frost, snow and ice conditions.
2. The cost associated with the removal operations.

This planning process is highly complex due to the variable conditions encountered during each storm. Factors such as the rate and accumulation of snowfall, temperature, time of day or night, wind direction and velocity, and the duration of the storm, all interact to create a unique aspect for each storm event with the result that no two storms are ever identical.

STORM DECISION MAKING

The MCDOT has developed procedures to perform anti-icing and snow and ice removal operations for varying weather conditions. Personnel will respond each time the MCDOT determines or it is notified that weather conditions include the possibility of creating a hazard for the motoring public. The County's snow removal operations are sophisticated and efficient.

The key element in implementing an efficient frost and snow and ice control program is receiving timely weather information. Accurate weather forecasting is imperative in deciding on the level of response. The MCDOT uses multiple weather forecasting services, to assist in setting the time of and level of response necessary for an event. These forecasts provide accurate weather information and greatly assist in increasing the effectiveness of the snow and ice control program. The MCDOT also implements the use of RWIS (remote weather information systems) in its weather forecasting and decision making process.

When a response is warranted, the Maintenance Superintendent, or a designee, will determine the level of response necessary. The County Engineer will be informed of all operations.

It is the policy of the MCDOT to dispatch plow trucks and personnel just prior to any predicted snow or ice event, or as soon as possible when an event takes place.

ALERTING SNOW AND ICE CONTROL PERSONNEL

Although the MCDOT's Maintenance Section is tasked specifically with staffing snow and ice control operations, all employees of the MCDOT, including engineering and administrative staff may have a responsibility to assist in snow removal operations if necessary.

Snow removal equipment with a gross vehicle weight of 26,000lbs and greater shall be operated by employees with a valid CDL license and shall adhere to the McHenry County CDL policy. All plow and equipment operators are required to perform a pre-trip and post trip inspection and fill out the proper documentation. All plow operators are also required to fill out snow and ice reports following an event or a shift. All operators shall report any safety related or equipment related issue prior to leaving the facility for evaluation by a supervisor.

GENERAL SNOW AND ICE PROCEDURES

Depending on the anticipated weather conditions, varying operation levels are used. Different operations are used to address a range of conditions which include for example preparing for frost on bridges, split shift mode primarily due to the length of the upcoming event, to standard operations to cover plowing for the entire County highway system.

Post Event Procedures

Generally done following a snow event or during windy conditions. Removing snow from shoulders and pushing snow or snow drifts back can be accomplished using the plow and/or wing plows. It is the practice of the MCDOT to perform these operations whenever possible during daylight operations. The purpose of these operations are for roadway drainage, future snow storage, prevent snow from accumulation on the roadway, improved visibility and shoulder use for disabled vehicles. Plow operators shall perform these operations using extreme caution, at slow speeds with the dump body in the down position. A road grader, 6X6 truck with benching wing and loaders may be used in addition to plow trucks.

ITEMS IN RIGHT OF WAY

The MCDOT will not be liable for damage to items placed within the right-of-way. However, should a U.S. Post Office approved mailbox be damaged due to snow and ice operations, the mailbox will be replaced with a temporary mailbox until such time that a permanent mailbox can be installed by the MCDOT. The type of permanent mailbox will be determined by the DOT at a least cost.

EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE

Occasionally, the MCDOT is asked to respond to winter weather related emergency situations beyond the County Highway System. It is the policy of the MCDOT to offer emergency assistance in the form of escorting, clearing and salting only when requested by the County Sheriff or EMA. The response will be for rescue, police, fire department and state, township, or municipal operations only and only when resources permit such assistance. It is the sole discretion of the County Engineer and/or the Highway Maintenance Superintendent to decide whether to provide said assistance.

ASSISTANCE TO PRIVATE PROPERTY

Under no circumstance will a County employee be allowed to use County owned equipment to push, pull, or tow a stranded private vehicle from a roadway. The employee may, if a hazard exists, use his County issued cellular phone or radio to notify the MCDOT to contact the local police or sheriff of the hazard. Likewise, under no circumstance will a County employee use any County owned equipment to perform any snow or ice removal on private or commercial property.

DEPARTURE FROM POLICY

The County recognizes that conditions may be so unusual or unexpected that a departure from this Policy should be authorized. Therefore, when conditions warrant, the County Engineer, in consultation with the Maintenance Superintendent, may order a departure from these general rules when, in their opinion, conditions require such an action. This policy shall only serve as general rules and guidelines. The MCDOT shall not be liable for any departure from this policy.