

JOHNSON COUNTY SNOW AND ICE REMOVAL POLICY

Adopted by the Board of Supervisors on March 31, 2011

SECTION I: PURPOSE.

The purpose of this policy is to set forth Johnson County's policy and level of service in respect to removal of snow or ice and regarding placing sand, salt, chemical, or other abrasive material on its secondary road system pursuant to the provisions of Section 309.67 and Section 668.10 of the Code of Iowa. The policy describes the minimum service expected to be provided by the County. The County reserves the right, however, to provide services under this policy which exceed the minimum standards set out herein.

SECTION II: POLICY AND LEVEL OF SERVICE

A. GENERAL

Removal of snow or ice and placing of sand, salt, chemicals, or other abrasive material on the secondary road system is primarily for the benefit of local residents of this county. Each storm has individual characteristics and must be dealt with accordingly. The portion of a roadway improved for travel will have upon it snow and ice in a compacted condition. These conditions may be continuous, or they may be more concentrated on hills, in valleys, curves, intersections and/or other locations of particular topographical or traffic features. On occasion, some Johnson County personnel may be rendered unavailable due to the requirements of the Omnibus Transportation Employee Testing Act of 1991. If this occurs, service under this policy will be scaled back accordingly based upon the personnel available.

B. REMOVAL/ABRASIVE PLACEMENT CAPACITY

The County's existing snow removal equipment will be utilized to implement this policy. The level of salting and/or placing of chemicals or other abrasive material during the winter season shall be accomplished within the amount of money budgeted for this service as contained in the County's secondary roads budget adopted by the Board of Supervisors and submitted to and approved by the Iowa Department of Transportation. As such, frequency of material application may be adjusted based upon the availability of material or sufficiency of resources.

C. REMOVAL OPERATIONS

The entire width of that portion of the road improved for travel may not be cleared of snow, ice, compacted snow and ice, or frost. Snow cleared from that part of the roadway improved for travel shall be placed on or in the adjacent shoulder, ditch, or right-of-way except that during snow removal operations, snow may be temporarily stored on a portion of the traveled way. Snow can be expected to accumulate adjacent to the traveled portions to the extent that a motorists' sight distance to both the left and the right may be greatly reduced or impaired. The snow removed from intersections will be piled in their corners and may result in piles of unequal height. The line of sight, sight distances, or visibility of motorists approaching these intersections may be greatly reduced or impaired. Property owners shall not push snow from their driveways or property in general onto the County right-of-way, including the roadway, shoulders or any adjacent sidewalk/trail. Property owners acting in violation of this policy may be cited for a violation of Iowa Code Section 318.3 regarding obstructions in highway right-of-

way. The County shall not be responsible for snow pushed or otherwise placed on the roadway or shoulders by others.

D. MOTOR VEHICLE OPERATIONS

In general, Motorists should be sure to adjust their driving in a manner that is appropriate for the existing conditions. Motorists shall operate their vehicles during these conditions with additional caution and watchfulness, especially in respect to the surface of the roadway, and reduced or impaired visibility. In respect to roadways that have only one lane open to traffic, further extreme watchfulness and caution should be exercised by the motorist, and their speed should be reduced to a speed which is reasonable and proper for the existing conditions, but not to exceed 10 miles per hour. During these conditions no additional warning or regulatory signs will be placed warning of impaired sight distances, visibility at intersections, road blockage, one-lane conditions, or that the road surface is slick or slippery, or what the advise speed should be.

E. MUNICIPAL ROADS

Snow removal, chemical, or abrasive placement will be performed within the corporate limits of a municipality only in accordance with agreements with those municipalities.

SECTION III: SEQUENCE OF SERVICE

A. GENERAL

This Section indicates the general sequence of service the County will provide with respect to snow and ice removal and chemical and abrasive placement on County roads. In the implementation of this policy, however, the County Engineer and his/her delegated representative reserve the right to select the actual sequence of roads for service as conditions warrant, and shall determine when drifting, wind velocity, and additional snow or snowstorms require that the snow removal equipment be removed from the roadway, for reasons of hazardous visibility or due to lack of progress in removal or that additional clearance of paved routes be accomplished prior to the clearance of other roads.

B. PRIORITIES

Generally, priorities will be all paved and oiled roads. Stone surfaced roads with residents will be the next priority with the main Farm to Market routes having preference in this category while dead end roads will be last in this category. Stone surfaced roads will first be plowed to enable everyone access from one direction. These roads then will be opened to two-way traffic. Next, the connecting type stone- surfaced roads will be plowed to provide for more direct travel between various points. Finally, stone surfaced roads with no residences along them and dirt roads will be the last priority and may not be plowed. Stone-surfaced or dirt roads may be plowed out of sequence where it would contribute to efficiency or snow removal unit routing or progress. For the purposes of this policy, roads that are oiled, or partially oiled, only as the result of a formal or informal agreement with the County may be treated as though they are stone surfaced roads.

C. HOURS OF OPERATION

Snow removal units, including those applying abrasive materials, normally will operate only during daylight hours, or shortly before daylight, Monday through Friday (approximately 4:00

a.m. through 6:00 p.m.), and if possible may be confined to normal work hours of 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. On Saturdays, Sundays or holidays, the normal level of service will be implemented if conditions warrant. Only in cases of “emergency” as set out in this policy will snow removal units operate from 6:00 p.m. to 4:00 a.m. In the event of a severe storm with severe drifting, all roads will be opened to one-way traffic until all rural residences have a way out. Then plowing will continue to develop two-way traffic. There is no time limit after a storm subsides within which any portion of the policy shall be implemented.

D. PAVED AND OILED ROUTES

1. The initial effort will be to get all routes open to one-lane traffic as soon as possible during daylight hours after a storm has subsided.
2. After one-lane travel is possible, subsequent snow removal will be carried on only during normal working hours.
3. It is not the policy of the county to provide dry pavement conditions.
4. After roads have been plowed as provided in this section, sand, salt, chemical, or other abrasive materials may be placed on them as necessary and as materials allow. Priority will be given to intersections, hills and curves. This spreading will normally stop when air temperature is 20 degrees Fahrenheit or lower. Sand, salt, chemical and other abrasive material application on paved and oiled routes shall take precedence over application of abrasive materials on stone surfaced and dirt routes.
5. Subject to the normal hours of operation described above, snow removal units will normally begin operation no later than after an accumulation of two (2) inches of snow.

E. STONE SURFACED AND DIRT ROUTES

1. The initial effort will be to get a one-lane access open to residences as soon as possible during daylight hours after a storm has subsided.
2. After one-lane travel is possible to residences, subsequent snow removal will be carried on only during normal working hours.
3. After roads have been plowed as provided in this section, abrasive materials may be applied upon portions of stone roads as necessary and as materials allow. Priority will be given to intersections, hills and curves.
4. Snow removal units may not operate at all on dirt roads without residences.
5. Subject to the normal hours of operation described above, snow removal units will normally begin operation no later than after an accumulation of four (4) inches of snow or when the accumulation of snow has ended, whichever occurs later.

SECTION IV: MISCELLANEOUS

A. RURAL MAILBOXES

The County shall not pay for or replace mailboxes damaged as a result of snow removal unless actual contact is made by County equipment. Residents should mark mailboxes in drift prone areas to help road workers avoid them. Claims, for damage are to be submitted to the Secondary Roads Department within 48 hours to be considered for payment or repair.

B. FENCES

The County shall not pay for or replace fences damaged as a result of snow removal unless actual contact is made by County equipment. Fence gates shall not obstruct snow removal equipment within the County right of way and shall not be covered for damage claims as part of this ordinance. Claims for damaged fences are to be submitted to the Secondary Roads Department within 30 days to be considered for payment or repair.

C. OBSTRUCTIONS

Obstructions on the road right-of-way such as hay bales, vehicles, or fences which might cause drifting shall be removed by the owners. The County shall not be liable for damage to stalled or stranded vehicles on the traveled portion of the roadway or other obstructions which will interfere with snow and ice removal and abrasive placement. The owners of stalled or stranded vehicles should immediately notify the Sheriff's Office. Owners shall remove stalled or stranded vehicles as soon as possible.

D. AGRICULTURAL NECESSITIES

Feed, livestock and other agricultural necessities should be removed from areas accessible only by dirt roads without residences because they may be impassable.

E. PRIVATE ROADS

The County will not operate snow removal units on private roads. Normal county removal operations may result in snow or ice being deposited in private roads and drives adjacent to public roads. Snow from private drives shall not be placed on the shoulders or roadways of a public road.

F. EQUIPMENT

Motor vehicle travel on the Johnson County secondary roads system when adverse conditions of snow or ice exist shall be undertaken only by vehicles which are properly equipped for the conditions present.

SECTION V: LIMITATION ON SERVICE

THE FOLLOWING SERVICES SHALL NOT BE PERFORMED

1. Sidewalks, trails within the County right-of-way, and trails separate from the County right-of-way will not be plowed or have sand, salt, chemical or other abrasive material applied on them.
2. Paved shoulders may be plowed or have abrasives applied in conjunction with dealing with the traveled portion of the road, but special efforts may not be made to clear and treat the shoulders.
3. The County will not place additional warning or regulatory signs warning of impaired sight distances, visibility at intersections, road blockages, one-lane conditions, or that the road surface is slick or slippery, or what the advised speed should be.
4. Sanding, salting or placing of other abrasives, outside normal working hours, upon a roadway which is slick or slippery due to the formation of frost.
5. These limitations supersede any policies previously adopted which may set forth different levels of service.

SECTION VI: EMERGENCIES/DISASTERS

A. RESPONSE

In an “Emergency” or “Disaster” condition, the County may deviate from the above-described sequence of service and/or level of service for whatever period of time necessary to appropriately respond to the emergency or disaster. The County will attempt to continue its normal snow and ice removal and abrasive material application activities as soon as practicable after the emergency or disaster condition has ended.

B. DEFINITION/DETERMINATION OF AN EMERGENCY

An “Emergency” condition shall be considered as one where a loss of life or serious injury has occurred or is probable, or where extensive loss of property has occurred or is imminent. The existence of an emergency condition may be declared by the County Engineer, or designee, or the County Sheriff, or designee. Citizen reports of potential emergencies should be made directly to the Joint Emergency Communications Center (319.356.6800) or the Johnson County Sheriff’s Office (319.356.6020), which office shall then contact the County Engineer, or designee, for determination of the appropriate response, if any.

C. DEFINITION/DETERMINATION OF A DISASTER

A “Disaster” under this section shall mean an event qualifying as a disaster under either Iowa Code § 29C.2(1), as amended, or the All-Hazard Emergency Operations Plan for Johnson County. A disaster condition occurs when the All-Hazard Emergency Operations Plan for Johnson County is activated by a disaster declaration from either the Governor or the Board of Supervisors.