

## **INYO COUNTY ROAD DEPARTMENT SNOW REMOVAL POLICY**

### Goal

The goal of the Inyo County Road Department's snow removal operations is to ensure the safety of its employees and volunteers and provide for the safest possible movement of traffic throughout the county during winter months and particularly during storm periods. The Inyo County Road Department has established snow removal guidelines for all road department equipment operators, which may be amended by the Road Commissioner whenever he deems it necessary to accomplish this policy.

The Snow Removal Policy provides Road Department staff with guidance and ensures that:

- Public and employee safety is always the primary concern,
- Snow removal operations will be distributed throughout the County as evenly as possible,
- Priorities for snow removal are established and understood by all and,
- Proper responsibility and authority is established.

### Priorities

Snow removal in Inyo County is a function of manpower and equipment. Snow removal will normally occur during daylight hours unless situations occur that requires additional snow removal efforts.

In an effort to achieve the County's goal of safe snow removal operation, the following priorities have been set to ensure the efficient and safe order of snow removal on County roads.

Priority Order:

- A. Support for emergency agency responses;
- B. Main arterial, collector streets and school bus routes;
- C. Secondary residential streets;
- D. Non-residential outlying paved roads;
- E. Outlying paved streets that are not normally plowed but may require access.

In conjunction with the above Priority order, all roads in the Inyo County Maintained Mileage system have been assigned an A-E priority rating. A copy of the Road Priority List is attached. In general, this priority rating will establish a precedence list that the Inyo County Road Maintenance Supervisors and operators will follow. However, when removing snow in remote areas such as Aspendell, Habeggars, Darwin, etc., crews will attempt to open all County roads before leaving that area.

Subject to the severity of the snow event and the availability of manpower and equipment, the following “Levels of Operation” have been established. In situations where the snow event is more severe in some areas than others, the Road Commissioner or Road Superintendent may move equipment and manpower from the less impacted areas to work in the more severely impacted areas as needed.

#### Level 1 Operations:

During normal, manageable storms, snow will be removed from priority A through D roads concurrently with preference given to emergency facilities (fire department, hospitals, etc.), main arterial roads, school bus routes and collector streets. The Inyo County Road Commissioner shall be authorized to close roads and determine detours as necessary for public safety.

When snow occurs in the mountains only, mountain collector and secondary roads will become top priority. If snow occurs on the valley floor as well as in the mountains, the priority will shift to the developed areas in the valley first, following the established priority order.

#### Level 2 Operations:

When snowfall exceeds the ability of the County Road Crews to successfully perform normal operations throughout the county, the Road Superintendent may, with the concurrence of the Road Commissioner, implement Level 2 operations.

During Level 2 Operations, roads will be plowed by order of priority and the D level priority may be suspended until such time as normal operations are again possible. Other properly licensed personnel within the Road Department may be assigned to storm related activities. In addition, the standards for the C priority, secondary residential streets, may be lowered to allow for narrower traffic lanes. The Inyo County Road Commissioner shall be authorized to close roads and determine detours as necessary for public safety.

#### Level 3 Operations:

When snowfall exceeds the ability of the County Road Crews to successfully perform Level 2 operations, the Road Superintendent may, with the concurrence of the Road Commissioner, implement level 3 operations. During level 3 operations, emphasis is placed on level A and B roads. Snow removal on priority C roads will be limited and snow removal on priority D roads will be suspended. To supplement Road Department personnel, other properly licensed county personnel, such as solid waste personnel, may be asked to work overtime hours on storm related activities provided that they have the necessary licenses and experience. If warranted, a local emergency may be declared and assistance from other departments and agencies may be required.

#### Specific Procedures

- A. Normal snow removal efforts in Aspendell, Habeggars, Pine Creek, Glacier Lodge, Onion Valley, Whitney Portal and Nine Mile Rd areas will occur during daylight hours only and after a minimum of three inches of snow has accumulated on the county roadway. (Three inches on a deck or in a yard does not mean that there is three inches on the roadway. Snow may not build up as rapidly on the black pavement). Snow removal on Whitney Portal and Onion Valley roads will occur in the spring as these roads are closed for the winter.

Special care should be taken in mountain areas, as avalanche conditions may exist. This is especially true during heavy snowfall years and in the springtime after a heavy snow season. Snow removal efforts may be suspended at anytime when avalanche conditions become a safety concern for snow removal crews. Guidelines for working in avalanche areas can be found in the Maintenance Personnel Guidelines for Procedures in Avalanche Hazard Areas and Avalanche Survival and Search-Rescue Procedures compiled by Al Schindler and Tom Lupton. Avalanche beepers must be worn in avalanche prone areas. In the event of an emergency or extremely heavy snow conditions, the Road Commissioner or Road Superintendent may adjust working hours for the crews.

If the Road Department determines that more than two feet of snow has fallen during any one shift in mountainous areas, snow removal operations will be suspended until after the storm has passed. In addition, when conditions become so severe that Road Crews cannot keep up with falling snow and the threat of avalanches becomes likely, Road Crews may leave the area until such time as it is safe to resume snow removal operations. When it becomes necessary for Road Crews to suspend snow removal activities, the Road Department will attempt to inform the residents of the suspension in snow removal operations as quickly as possible. This may be done by media announcements or email correspondence when possible.

- B. The Road Department may direct Road Crews to remove snow in areas where operations have been suspended, but **only when requested by an emergency service agency or the Inyo County Sheriff's Department**. If emergency operations are requested, the Road Department will make every effort to continue snow removal operations, but may still suspend operations in the event that extremely hazardous conditions exist. The personnel and equipment that may be sent to assist with emergency situations will be determined by the Road Commissioner or his designated representative depending upon the circumstances of the emergency situation. For the purposes of this policy, an emergency shall be defined as the actual or threatened existence of conditions of disaster or extreme peril to the safety of persons and property.

If an emergency situation occurs, the person or persons with the emergency are instructed to call 911. Residents are reminded that it is a crime to make a false emergency request, and the County will consider prosecution of any person or persons that request removal of snow from a county road based on a false statement that they have an emergency.

- C. Except for emergencies, snow will not be removed from mountain roads that are normally closed for the winter. These roads will be opened in the spring. Opening times for these roads will vary depending on the amount of snow pack on the road for that year and the availability of manpower and equipment.
- D. Snow removal on South Lake Road for the opening of fishing season will only be done when the following conditions exist. Snow depths will be measured by the Road Department on or as close to the first day of April as possible and will be measured at the wooden bridge that crosses Bishop Creek at the Tye Lakes Trailhead, at the entrance to Parcher's Resort, and just below the dam at South Lake. If the snow depth is more than 4 feet in any location, snow will not be removed beyond that point. If snow depth is 4 feet or less, road crews will remove snow until they have once again reached snow depths in excess of 4 feet. Snow removal efforts will resume when snow levels reach 4 feet or less. The Road Department may assist with snow removal, but will not be responsible for removing snow from the Forest Service parking lot.

- E. Snow Removal on Lake Sabrina Road for the opening of fishing season will only be done when the following conditions exist. Snow depths will be measured by the Road Department on or as close to the first day of April as possible. If snow depth is 4 feet or less, road crews will remove snow until they have once again reached snow depths in excess of 4 feet. Snow removal efforts will resume when snow levels again are less than 4 feet deep. In addition, the County road crews will begin snow removal activities on the County's portion of Lake Sabrina Road after the Forest Service or Cal-Trans have opened the Forest Service gate and Cal-Trans has concluded their snow removal activities. The County will not be responsible for removing snow from the Cal-Trans portion of Lake Sabrina Road, but may agree to remove snow on the Cal-Trans portion of Lake Sabrina Road if agreed upon by Cal-Trans and the County. The County will not be responsible for the opening or closing of the Forest Service gate on Lake Sabrina Road at any time, unless ordered by law enforcement in the case of an emergency. The Road Department may assist with snow removal, but will not be responsible for removing snow from the Forest Service parking lot.
- F. Subdivision roads may not be plowed to full width if parked vehicles or other obstructions exist that may interfere with the safe and continuous operation of snow removal equipment. In addition, all garbage cans must be placed off the roadway. If garbage cans are present on the roadway, snow removal crews may not conduct any plowing activities until the garbage cans are removed from the roadway. Manpower and equipment will return to resume normal snow removal activities after all obstructions have been removed, including garbage cans, provided that the storm has passed and adequate resources are available.
- G. During snowplow operations, every effort will be made to leave as small a berm of snow in front of driveways, mailboxes and private encroachments as possible. Any berm of snow that is left in front of a driveway, mailbox or private encroachment will become the responsibility of the homeowner or resident to remove. During the cleanup phase, after storms have passed and manpower and equipment become available, the Road Department will remove snow berms from in front of any remaining driveways. The Road Department will not remove snow from or around mailboxes or private encroachments at any time.
- H. Actual snow removal hours should be between 4:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. Road Maintenance Supervisors may require operators to show up early if they have to travel long distances before they can begin snow removal work or to prepare equipment for snow removal operations that day. The Road Commissioner or Road Superintendent may change these hours if certain circumstances warrant a change. Snow removal operations that require a snow blowing machine will occur during daylight hours only. In cases of heavy snowfall, crews may be required to work in shifts to accomplish snow removal goals. Road Department employees that are not normally involved in snow removal efforts may also be asked to help. These employees must have the appropriate licenses and be familiar with the equipment that they will be assigned to operate.
- I. All plowing activities shall be performed in compliance with the California Motor Vehicle Code, specifically, Section 34501.2 which says "No operator will be allowed to operate a commercial vehicle (i.e. snowplow truck), more than 12 hours per day or more than 80 hours in any consecutive 8-day period". However, operators may exceed these driver hours of service when directed to do so by law enforcement during the course of an emergency, pursuant to Section 15210 (D) and Section 2800 of the California Motor Vehicle Code.
- J. The Road Commissioner or his designee may direct road crews to remove snow from state highways or private roads in order to access County roadways. This may also be done when requested by law enforcement in the case of an emergency.

## INYO COUNTY ROAD DEPARTMENT

### SNOW REMOVAL GUIDELINES

During the winter months, the Road Department is responsible for the snow removal on Inyo County roads. There are many different ways to remove snow as well as many different types of snow removal equipment.

The ultimate goal for the Road Department is to have dry, black pavement on every paved road maintained by the county. In order to reach this goal, all operators will use the following techniques for removing snow.

Road Department equipment will not be taken onto private property at any time without the approval of the Road Commissioner. Any Road Department employee removing snow or doing any work with Road Department equipment off of county right-of-way without authorization will be subject to disciplinary action.

### DURING STORMS

During storms, every effort will be made to keep our roads safe and passable. Roads shall be cleared in accordance with the adopted priorities. All roads will be plowed from centerline to the outside when possible. In the case of extreme snowfall, snow may need to be pushed to the center of the road, especially in residential areas. Initial opening will be one pass each way with traffic, using sufficient speed to cast the snow in such a manner as to minimize any berm. Whenever possible, operators should move snow from the residential side of a street to any vacant area on the other side of the street. This may be done during the initial opening or after the storm is over. Operators must maintain safe and legal speeds for the road that they are working on. After the operator has made the initial road openings, the operator should then go back and widen each road. Ideally, snow should be pushed out past the edge of pavement to allow for more snow that may accumulate from approaching storms. In some cases this will not be possible due to extreme amounts of snow already present on the shoulder, conditions that would make it unsafe or private property that is in the way.

When plowing or blowing outlying areas, all roads will be done before leaving the area, unless you are instructed to do otherwise.

Intersections should be cleaned and sanded as needed.

### AFTER STORMS

After storms, snow removal efforts should be concentrated on roads that need to be opened or widened. If the weather permits, slushing of residential streets should be done at this time. Roads should be checked for icy spots caused from melting and refreezing snow and then sanded accordingly. These spots should be checked first thing in the morning and before quitting time in the evening.

## OPERATOR GUIDELINES

Every effort should be made to keep individual and equipment time sheets up to date.

If at any time you are involved in an accident of any kind, your immediate supervisor must be notified and an accident report filled out. In some instances, it may be necessary to notify the police. These accidents include vehicles, private property, manholes, etc. Do not make any prejudicial statements that may construe fault at the scene of any personal injury or liability accident. If you are unable to reach a supervisor or the police, make sure you document the incident, recording the date, time, type of accident, vehicles, property, or persons involved and any other information you are able to gather at the scene. If, after gathering all information, you are still unable to reach someone, use your best judgment in deciding how to handle the situation or whether to leave the scene.

## GRADERS AND LOADERS

- A. Pre-Operation – All fluid levels will be checked and filled to proper levels. All lights must be in working order. A visual walk-around inspection must be made, to include chain condition and cutting edge condition. Any necessary minor repairs will be made and reported to a supervisor or mechanic before leaving the yard. Larger repairs will be done by a mechanic. Pre-operation books must be filled out.
- B. Operation – During operation, the operator is responsible for watching all gauges on the machine, the chain condition, and cutting edge condition. The cutting edge will be replaced when there is approximately ½ “ inch minimum between it and the moldboard. All bolts must be in place and kept tight at all times. If the cutting edge needs repair or replacement or the chains need attention, it will be done immediately to avoid costly and time consuming repairs later. Care should be taken to maintain even and straight cutting edges.
- C. Post Operation - Before parking any grader or loader, all fluid levels will be checked and filled. Blades that need replacing or bolts will be taken care of. Chains that need repairs will be repaired. All minor repairs will be done by the operator.. Any repairs that operators cannot perform will be written up on the proper forms and turned into the mechanics. The mechanics will determine importance and repair according to their schedule. Hour meter will be checked and, if service is due, mechanics must be notified. All vehicles used during the shift will be greased at the end of the shift if needed. All vehicles will be fueled at the end of the day. Operators should report any problems with machinery or operations as general information to their supervisors at the end of the shift if possible.

## BLOWERS

- A. Pre-Operation – All fluid levels will be checked and filled to proper levels. All lights must in working order. A visual walk-around must be made, to include chain condition, flight condition, blower head and cutting edge condition. Any necessary minor repairs must be made and reported to a supervisor or mechanic before leaving the yard. Larger repairs will be done by a mechanic. Pre-operations book must be filled out.
- B. Operation – During operation, the operator is responsible for watching all gauges on the machine, the chain condition, blower head condition, also rear engine and hydrostatic performance. The cutting edge will be replaced when there is approximately ½” inch mini-

mum between it and the mold board. All bolts must be in place and tight at all times. If cutting edges or chains need repair, they will be done immediately to avoid costly and time consuming repairs later. Visibility is bad in blowers and extra care must be taken, especially when backing up. When roading a blower, speed must be kept down.

- C. Post Operation – Before parking any blower, all fluid levels will be checked and filled. Cutting edges and flights will be checked and all bolts will be replaced or tightened. Chains that need repairs will be repaired. All grease fittings on head will be greased. All minor repairs will be done by the operator if possible. Any repairs that the operator cannot perform will be written up on the proper forms and turned in to the mechanics. The mechanics will determine importance and repair according to their schedule. Hour meters will be checked and, if service is due, mechanics must be notified. All blowers will be greased as needed and fueled at the end of each shift if possible.

## PLOW TRUCKS

- A. Pre Operation – All fluid levels will be checked and filled to proper levels. All lights must be in working order. A visual walk-around inspection of the truck must be made, and pre-op books need to be filled out and signed with appropriate copies given to the supervisor. Any minor repairs must be made and reported to a supervisor or mechanic before leaving the yard. Larger repairs will be done by a mechanic.
- B. Operation – During operation the operator is responsible for watching all gauges on the truck, the chain condition and cutting edge condition. The cutting edge will be replaced when there is a ½” inch minimum between it and the moldboard. All bolts must be in place and kept tight at all times. Shear bolts on the plow frame should be checked periodically. If the cutting edges need repair or replacement, or the chains need attention, it will be done right away to avoid costly and time consuming repairs later. Care should be taken to maintain even and straight cutting edges.
- C. Post Operation – Before parking any truck, all fluid levels will be checked and filled. Blades, which need replacing or bolts will be taken care of unless told to do otherwise. Chains that need repairs will be repaired. All minor repairs will be done by the operator. Any repairs the operator cannot perform will be written up on the proper forms and turned in to the supervisor or the mechanics. The Mechanics will determine importance and will do the repairs according to their schedule. Hour meters will be checked and, if service is due, mechanics and supervisors must be notified. All vehicles must be fueled at the end of each shift. Trucks must be loaded with cinders at the end of each shift unless told to do otherwise by the Supervisor or his designee.