



# Snow

## Removal Info

**Background:** Recent winters have brought us record snowfalls over prolonged periods. These snow events impact the citizens of Spokane, limiting the ability to get around the community safely. This snow removal plan was developed to address these challenges.

The City's current approach is designed to:

- Improve safety for motorists and pedestrians.
- Ensure emergency responders can reach citizens.
- Enhance movement for pedestrians, motorists, and economic activity.

The approach will require the City and citizens to work together.

- The City has committed more plows, enhanced snow removal efforts, and greater communications with citizens. The City will also make an attempt to clear sidewalks around City-owned properties.
- Citizens and business owners will need to follow parking restrictions and commit to keeping sidewalks clear adjacent to their properties. Clearing off vehicles, hydrants, and storm drains also is important.

Below, please find a series of frequently asked questions to get you all the details about our snow removal plan.

### **When is the "Snow Season?"**

The City's defined the snow season runs from Nov. 15 to March 15. Spokane sees most of its snowfall during these four months of the year, with snow often concentrated in December and January.

### **What is a "Snow Event?"**

During Snow Season, the City monitors weather conditions 24 hours a day. When snowfall reaches certain thresholds, the City will declare a snow event, which triggers a variety of responsibilities for the City and its citizens. We have two snow event stages, depending on conditions.

### **What's included in a Stage 1 Snow Event?**

The City will declare a Stage 1 Snow Event when 2 inches of snow are on the ground and 4 inches more are anticipated during the current snow event. This declaration will trigger a number of actions.

### The City will:

- Notify citizens of the snow event.
- Plow arterials and fixed STA bus routes on a 20-hour schedule until complete.
- Supplement Street crews with crews from other City departments, as needed.
- Plow Neighborhood Business Districts to the curb, as part of the arterial routes.
- Plow around hospitals and in medical district, as needed.
- Plow residential hills (routes 20 and above).
- Clear snow in Central Business District using de-icer or by plowing to the center of the street.
- Clear sidewalks around priority City-owned property within 24 hours.

### Citizens, meanwhile, will be asked to:

- Move parked cars off all arterials and fixed STA bus routes within 6 hours.
- Move parked cars in residential hill routes (routes 20 and above) to one side of the street within 6 hours. (Odd side of the street during odd snow seasons—2013-14; Even side of the street during even seasons—2014-15).
- Clear sidewalks of snow within 24 hours.

### What's included in a Stage 2 Snow Event?

The City will declare a Stage 2 Snow Event when 6 inches of snow are on the ground and more is anticipated during the current snow event. Again, this declaration will trigger a number of actions.

### The City will:

- Notify citizens of changing snow event.
- Immediately embark on a full-City plow. A full-City plow will take about 4 days of 24-hour operation, depending on weather conditions.
- Bring in private contractors to supplement City crews.
- Clear sidewalks around City-owned property within 24 hours.
- Be ready to implement the "Snow Corridor Plan," if weather conditions severely restrict the City's ability to keep up with snowfall.

### Citizens, meanwhile, will be asked to:

- Keep parked cars off of all arterials and fixed STA bus routes.
- Move vehicles out of downtown street parking spaces between 2 a.m. and 6 a.m.
- Move parked cars in residential areas to one side of the street within 12 hours. (Odd side of the street during odd snow seasons—2013-14; Even side of the street during even seasons—2014-15).
- Clear sidewalks of snow within 24 hours.
- Clear snow off of vehicles that are parked along the street.
- Clear snow from around curb ramps, fire hydrants, storm drains, and mail boxes.

### What's the Snow Corridor Plan?

The Snow Corridor Plan is implemented when City crews cannot effectively keep arterials clear because of weather conditions. Crews will concentrate on identified routes (sign shown on the right) that citizens can rely on until conditions improve. The routes include:



### North-south

- Maple St./Ash St.— I-90 to the north City limits.
- Cedar St./High Dr./Hatch Rd.— I-90 to SR195
- Division St./Newport Hwy. — I-90 to the north City limits
- Bernard St./Grand Blvd.—Third Ave. to High Drive.
- Freya St./Greene St./Market St.—I-90 to the north City limits.
- Freya St./Thor St./Ray St./Regal St.—I-90 to 57th Ave.
- Hamilton St./Nevada St.—Trent Ave. to the north City limits.

## East-west

- Francis Ave./Nine Mile Rd. —West City limits on Nine Mile Rd. to Havana St.
- Wellesley Ave.—Assembly St. to Freya St.
- Mission Ave./Maxwell Ave./Trent Ave.— Ash St. to the east City limits.
- Sunset Hwy./Second Ave./ Third Ave.—West City limits to east City limits.
- 29th Ave.—High Dr. to Havana St.
- 37th Ave.—Bernard St. to the east City limits.

## Why do we need to restrict parking during snow events?

Restricting parking during snow events allows plow drivers to clear away more snow, widening the area available for cars, trucks and buses, and help improve driving conditions for motorists. In the downtown, parking restrictions also allow the City to clear snow from parking spaces, allowing for easier parking for customers. In residential areas, limiting parking to one side of the street allows plow drivers to move away from the curb, reducing the amount of snow and ice that ends up on sidewalks. Once the snow event is over, parking restrictions are lifted. Failing to comply with parking restrictions and may result in a ticket and/or towed vehicle.

## What happens in neighborhoods with little off-street parking?

The City suggests that Neighborhood Councils work to identify locations before the snow season where vehicles can be parked until the streets are plowed.

## What about abandoned cars along City streets?

Before the snow season, the City intends to conduct an emphasis to remove abandoned vehicles from the streets to avoid problems when plowing efforts get under way later in the year. If your vehicle is towed call 625-4100.

## Why is it important to keep sidewalks clear?

Sidewalks are an important mode of travel for many of Spokane's citizens. Our children use them to get to school and to their bus stops. Many people use them to reach Spokane Transit Authority stops and to get basic supplies at grocery stores and other locations. Icy and snow-packed sidewalks are dangerous and often force people to walk to their destinations in the street. Failing to comply with sidewalk clearing may result in a ticket.

## What is the City doing to help keep snow off of sidewalks?

Plowing pushes snow onto sidewalks, especially in areas where there are no planting strips next to the curb. When citizens consistently park on just one side of the street in the residential areas, City plow drivers can attempt to plow away from the curb and reduce the amount of snow that ends up on sidewalks. The City also recommends maintaining a berm next to the street when shoveling to help prevent snow from additional plows ending up in the sidewalk. Another great tip—shovel to the right side of your driveway when you're looking at the street. That prevents the plows from pushing the snow you just shoveled back into your driveway.

## How are citizens notified of snow events?

The City of Spokane will use a variety of methods to notify citizens when a snow event is declared. Notices will be sent to all local media, posted to the City's website at [www.spokanecity.org](http://www.spokanecity.org), added to CityCable 5 scrolling text information, sent through neighborhood email distribution networks, and added to electronic street signage, when possible.

Citizens can sign up for electronic updates from the City by creating an account at [www.spokanecity.org](http://www.spokanecity.org) and asking for news updates, by following us on Twitter at SpokaneCity, or liking us on Facebook at [spokanecity](http://spokanecity). They also may call the City's snow line at 456-2666 to find out when plows will be in their neighborhood or watch for updates online at [www.spokanecity.org](http://www.spokanecity.org).

### **What will happen during future years?**

The City is committed to continuous improvement. Each year the Snow Removal Plan is evaluated and appropriate changes are made. The City may ticket and/or tow for failing to comply with parking restrictions. The City also may ticket for not clearing sidewalks.

### **What are normal winter operations at the City?**

During the snow season, Street crews switch to 10-hour shifts, covering 20-hours a day, 7 days a week. Weather is monitored continuously for changing conditions. Crews plow snow, spread de-icer, and perform related tasks to improve driving conditions and keep citizens safe.

### **How does the City prepare for winter operations?**

Each fall, the City tunes up the truck plows, graders, de-icers, and sanders in preparation for winter weather. We prepare winter maintenance equipment; attach blades to trucks and snow plow blades to dump trucks, and ensure that contracts are in place with private contractors who can supplement our plow crews if needed. Monitor weather conditions continuously for changing conditions.

### **What are expectations of citizens during the snow season outside of events?**

Citizens are asked to keep their sidewalks clear of snow and ice every time snow accumulates 2 or more inches. It's about being a good neighbor. By City ordinance, adjacent property owners are responsible for keeping the sidewalks clear and safe, and liability issues rest with the adjacent property owner, not the City.

### **What can I do to prepare in advance for snow season?**

In advance of the snow season, citizens can make sure they have adequate snow shovels or a working snow blower. They may want to consider buying some de-icer or sand. They should also determine where they can park when a snow event is called. Make sure you know who in your neighborhood might need help with shoveling or other winter work and offer to help.

And, as always, watch for information when it snows.