

## Snow Removal Efforts by Town Crews on Public Roadways

The following information is provided in order to inform our Town of Marion residents of snow removal efforts, so they may know what to expect during and after a snow or ice event. It is our hope that this information will answer questions that frequently arise during the winter season, and help our residents and other motorists that use the streets within the Town to be better prepared for roadway conditions.

### The Snow Removal Effort, In General

Town crews are responsible for maintenance and snow/ice removal of all of the public streets and roadways within the town corporate limits with a few exceptions, most notably Interstate 81 and its ramps.

The Town gives highest priority for snow/ice removal to the roadways that carry the most traffic. Roadways with highest priority include Main Street (Route 11), Park Boulevard (Route 16N), and Commerce Street (Route 16 S). The goal is to quickly make these roadways passable, and remove the snow/ice to bare pavement as soon as practical considering the duration of the storm, accumulation, and temperatures. On-street parking spaces are not considered highest priority, so they will be treated as weather conditions and priorities allow.

The Town gives second priority for snow/ice removal to major collector streets and the steeper roadways. The goal is to make these roads passable as soon as practical considering the duration of the storm, accumulation, and temperatures.

The Town's third priority for snow/ice removal is all other public roadways, which essentially includes the local and residential roadways. The goal is to make these roads passable within 12 hours of the end of a snow/ice event.

In a typical snow/ice event, all roadways within the Town will have been plowed and treated with salt and/or gravel within 8 hours after the storm has passed and the precipitation has stopped. **Temperature, storm duration, and the amount of traffic on a roadway will have the most impact on how quickly snow and ice are removed down to bare pavement.** When temperatures are below 20° F, the effectiveness of the salt is greatly diminished. At this point, applying abrasive material such as small gravel to the roadway helps with traction and breaking the snow/ice pack.

As a reminder, even if the roadway appears to be cleared down to bare pavement, motorists should proceed cautiously, assuming that there are still slick areas on the roadway.

---

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

**Where does the Town get the salt for snow removal?**

**How many people and how much equipment is used to remove snow/ice from the public roadways?**

**Why is gravel mixed in with the salt?**

**Trucks drive by with their plows raised, or salt spreaders not engaged – why aren't they plowing or spreading salt?**

**Why do the plow trucks block my driveway with snow?**

**How is trash collection affected by snow/ice storms?**

---

**Where does the Town get the salt for snow removal?**

We currently purchase salt from VDOT. Availability of salt has become an issue since the 2009-2010 winter. There are times when VDOT has not received salt deliveries to replenish their stockpiles, so we may be unable to get additional salt. If we run out of salt during a storm, we will continue using the plow trucks and spread gravel as appropriate, but road conditions will be significantly worse without the salt.

**How many people and how much equipment is used to remove snow/ice from the public roadways?**

The Town has several trucks equipped with plows and salt spreaders for our snow removal effort on public roadways. If there is significant snow accumulation along the roadside after plowing, and it is not likely to melt within a few days, we may bring in a front-end loader and dump trucks to load and transport snow to Town property out of the way of traffic.

**Why is gravel mixed in with the salt?**

Small gravel is mixed with the salt to help with traction and provide a mechanical means for breaking up the snow/ice on the roadway. Gravel is a much less expensive material than salt; however, it is also much less effective in snow melting.

## **Trucks drive by with their plows raised, or salt spreaders not engaged – why aren't they plowing or spreading salt?**

If you see a Town truck drive by with plow raised and salt spreader not engaged, it is typically due to two factors – either the truck is headed toward a higher priority roadway, or the roadway has already been plowed and treated with salt and we are waiting for the salt to begin melting the snow/ice. It is wasteful and ineffective to spread salt and then plow it away soon after.

## **Why do the plow trucks block my driveway with snow?**

We apologize for this inconvenience, but this is the only practical way to try to clear the roadways of snow and ice for traffic. It is the responsibility of the property owner to clear their driveway if they must get out. If you do remove the snow in front of your driveway, it is best to move it to the right side of your driveway if you are facing the roadway.

## **How is trash collection affected by snow/ice storms?**

We try to collect trash and recyclables on the regularly scheduled day. If our trash truck driver believes a road is not safe or passable, he will make the street superintendent or foreman aware of the concern and a plow truck will be sent as priority allows to improve the roadway condition. We also may use smaller trucks in some instances to help facilitate the garbage collection.

## **How can I help?**

The Town of Marion continues to strive to provide services to our community, including snow removal and street clearance, but sometimes, the snow falls so heavily that the crews have a difficult time just making passes along the primary roadways. Ice is a very different condition, and when icing occurs, even the heaviest 4wd trucks cannot navigate streets safely. Allow time for the crews to work safely to clear the streets. If you park along the curb (instead of in a driveway), snow plows are limited in what they are able to do. Some streets even become impassable because of cars parked curbside. Parking in driveways in anticipation of snow events will allow full access by road crews and speed up the clearing process.

When snow is falling, the best thing citizens can do is to stay at home whenever possible. PLEASE DO NOT CALL 911 to ask about road conditions, school or business closings, etc. - help us help you by keeping emergency lines open for life-threatening emergencies.

For weather alerts, you may sign up for free emails and text messages at [www.nixle.com/marionvirginia](http://www.nixle.com/marionvirginia), or text 24354 to 888777. Standard text messaging rates may apply.