



TOWN OF PENETANGUISHENE ROADS DIVISION

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS FOR WINTER OPERATIONS...

What streets are the first to be plowed/sanded?

The roads crews are each assigned a designated route. Each route has roads of different classes – class 3 roads are the major routes and class 5 roads are small lightly traveled roads. The routes are designed to clear roads in a systematic way that generally gives priority to class 3 roads. This method also provides the best access for Emergency Services.

Why does it sometimes take a long time for my road to be plowed?

During normal snowfall events, the plow driver will strive to follow his route in the same way every time. This will provide some consistency in the timeframe that the plow completes each road.

Some winter events are much more severe than others, leading to exceptionally large quantities of snowfall, drifting, or freezing rain. In these conditions, the plow may have to plow and sand the major roads on the route several times before starting the smaller side streets.

During periods of freezing rain, the plow may have to apply much more sand than normal, requiring the truck to return to the works yard more often for refilling.

How long does snow clearance usually take?

Most routes are completed within the quality standard depending on the type of storm. Clearance time may be longer when snowfalls are heavy, there are complications due to freezing rain, many cars are parked on the street, or crews are clearing snow during peak traffic times.

In accordance with Ministry of Labour regulations, drivers cannot work for more than 13 hours without an extended rest period. There are other restrictions limiting the number of consecutive days a driver can work. These regulations were put in place to protect our drivers and other motorists.

What happens during a normal snowfall event?

Overnight, winter patrollers monitor the conditions of the Town. If a winter storm develops the patroller will call in the daytime roads crews for a 3 am start and begin plowing and sanding major roads.

With this schedule most roads are cleared in time for the morning commute and school bus operations

What happens during non-routine snowfall events?

A heavy storm that develops quickly in the early morning 1 or 2 hours before daytime crews arrive at 7:00 am can cause significant accumulations before the roads crews can begin their routes.

The municipality has no control over the timing of a winter event therefore on occasionally a late start for the plow crew is unavoidable.

Heavy snowfall, drifting, poor visibility and freezing rain conditions can also impair road clearing operations and cause travel delays.

Staff continually monitor weather conditions and are assisted by the OPP and First Student Transportation to ensure public road safety.

The Town recognizes that these situations are frustrating to residents and will do everything possible to clear the roads as quickly and safely as possible.

Please note that the Town cannot respond to special requests to clear a particular road at any time. Crews must follow their assigned routes to ensure timely snow removal for the entire Town.

Who determines the plowing/sanding schedule?

Weather conditions determine how quickly the streets can be cleared. Snow clearing schedules change due to winter weather systems and temperature variances. Staff must assess several variables and quality standards to clearing snow when determining schedules. Everyone's safety is considered.

Why are cul-de-sac streets cleared last?

Due to varied shapes and sizes, cul-de-sacs pose a challenge to snowplow equipment. The roads are plowed to the cul-de-sac and then specialized equipment is brought in to remove the snow. Most cul-de-sacs are serviced after priority and other roads have been plowed. This process is time consuming and generally left until last to be fully cleared. The Municipality understands the frustration that can occur for affected residents. We continually review our process in an effort to reduce delays that occur in clearing snow in cul-de-sacs.

What do I do if my street was missed by the plow?

Although crews are very conscientious in following route schedules, sometimes streets may be missed due to an oversight. Please contact the administration office (705-549-7992) and crews will be notified and arrangements will be made to have the street cleared as soon as possible.

Why do plows push snow into driveways? / Why can't the operator lift the blade in front of my house?

Snow must be pushed to the side of the road to clear the road for traffic. The Town understands that this unavoidable situation can be frustrating.

Sometimes it is necessary to make several passes with the snowplows during a storm. At other times it will be necessary to push back the banks to allow room for more snow and to provide room for drainage during the thaw.

Homes that are located near corners or in cul-de-sacs may get more snow in the driveways than homes located on a straight section of road. This too is unavoidable.

Lifting the blade of the snowplows in front of a home to reduce the amount of snow going into the driveway is not allowed. The snowplow is put into operation to clear the snow off the road and in order for this to happen the blade must stay in contact with the road surface at all times.

Seasonal residents who visit their cottages during the winter months should expect their driveway's to be impassible unless the driveways have been regularly maintained. Snow that has accumulated over the winter will be hard-packed and icy.

My driveway was filled in by the snow plow right after I shovelled it out. What can be done about this?

It is important to note that our plow operators do not intentionally block driveways. Due to the difficulty of removing large amounts of snow, many people find it easier to clear the snow before it becomes too heavy. Often this is before the storm has ended and while snowplowing operations are still underway. Please understand that until roads are completely cleared, it should be anticipated that you might have to clear your driveway several times during and after storm events.

Also some snow removal contractors clear driveways before the road is plowed; this is an issue that should be discussed with your contractor.

I live on a corner lot and when the snow plow turns the corner, excessive amounts of snow seem to be accumulate on my driveway. Why can't the operator prevent this from happening?

In order to completely clear an intersection, the plow must make two passes. First, swing wide into the intersection to reach the centre area then to return to push snow back to the curb line. Also, speed is reduced and snow is placed at the curb line and is not spread over a wider swath in the boulevard.

Why is salt and sand used?

Salt is kept to a minimum. It is spread only on main roads and hills and occurs at the beginning of a snowfall's melting point. The mixture used on the locate streets is usually 4%. On priority streets 100% salt is applied. Salt reducing measures are implemented as appropriate. Our goal is to be proactive in the area while recognizing the safety of Municipal streets during slippery conditions.

When will sidewalk be sanded/plowed? What are our priority sidewalks?

Similar to snow maintenance on the roads, the Town is divided into 2 routes with arterial and collector roads completed first. Priority sidewalks include sidewalks around schools, medical facilities, community safety zones and business areas.

Sometimes due to equipment breakdown, manpower shortage or limited availability on weekends, only priority sidewalks maybe completed.

Why can't the Town sand the sides of the road where I walk?

Roads are maintained for vehicular, not pedestrian traffic. Sanders are designed with the applicator in the centre of the truck to apply sand to the centre of the road.

The Town understands the desire for fresh air and exercise but during the winter months it may not always be safe to walk on the side of the road. Icy conditions, poor visibility and snow clearing operations may create dangerous conditions for people and vehicles to share the roadway. At these times, residents are encouraged to stay off the roads and find an alternate source of exercise.

What do I do if a Town plow damages my property?

First, determine if the damage was caused by the plow, private contractor or the snow load. The Town has no control over snow load and does not reimburse homeowners for that type of damage.

Sometimes a plow will damage property. Mailboxes are particularly susceptible to this damage.

If your mailbox and garbage/recycling bins is hit by the plow, please call the Public Works department at 705-549-7992.

The Town is not responsible for damages that occur on Town property. The Town owned area between the road surface and the property line must be kept clear of private items such as fences, posts, ornaments, or certain plantings in accordance with Town bylaws. The Town does not reimburse property owners for damages to these items.