



## Highway Department

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### MEMORANDUM

TO: Cass County Commission

FROM: Jason Benson, County Engineer *JAB*

DATE: December 5, 2023

SUBJECT: Agenda Item for December 18, 2023, Commission Meeting: Snow and Ice Control Policy

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Cass County adopted a Snow and Ice Control Policy on November 20, 1995. This policy needs some minor updates regarding the verbiage and a few operational procedures. Attached is the current Snow and Ice Control with the updates that were presented at the Road Advisory Meeting on November 20, 2023. The policy changes were discussed with no further changes added by the Road Advisory Committee. The updated policy changes included changing the Highway Department's Snow Removal Priorities map to the current Snow Removal Routes map.

**SUGGESTED MOTION:** MOVE TO ADOPT THE CHANGES TO THE SNOW AND ICE CONTROL POLICY ALONG WITH THE CHANGES TO THE SNOW REMOVAL ROUTES MAP.

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**POLICY STATEMENT:** It is the policy of Cass County Government to provide reasonable snow and ice control within the budget constraints and consistent with traffic volumes and driver expectations. This document includes general policies followed by the Cass County Highway Department in control of snow and ice. Written department operations procedures may be developed and maintained to implement this policy. Written department operations procedures may be updated as needed by the Department Head and do not require adoption by the Commission.

**DEFINITIONS:**

**NORMAL SNOWFALL:** Light to heavy snowfall (up to 1 inch per hour) with up to ~~six~~ **three** inches total accumulation in a 24-hour period.

**SUPERVISOR:** The County Engineer, Highway Maintenance Superintendent, or Highway Operations Foremen.

**OPERATION HOURS:** Snow and ice control operations will be conducted between the hours of 5:00 AM and ~~8:00 PM~~ **5:00 PM**. **The county is only staffed for one shift of snow and ice removal.** Exceptions for potential emergencies will be made as determined appropriate by the supervisor. Work at courthouse parking lots may occur outside of normal operations hours. No individual driver should work more than 14 consecutive hours. Drivers should have a minimum of 8 hours between shifts. The supervisor will establish operations hours within the above parameters.

**OPERATIONS IN ADVERSE CONDITIONS:** Equipment will not be dispatched when, in the judgment of the supervisor, low visibility or other conditions are such that the risk to operators and other motorists outweighs the benefit of snow/ice operations. The general guideline is that equipment will not be dispatched when the estimated visibility in open areas is less than 500 feet. In the event of police, fire or medical emergency, vehicles may be dispatched at the direction of the supervisor.

**ROUTE ~~PRIORITIES~~ AND LEVELS OF SERVICE:** Levels of service are described for normal snowfalls. It is recognized by this policy that objective time of completions listed below are goals and may not always be achieved during normal snowfalls. Completion times for heavier snowfalls or extreme ice conditions are later commensurate with conditions. Bare pavement may not always be achievable, and roads may not be free of snow and ice. Cass County maintains approximately 641 miles of county roads. Snow removal operations are accomplished with 14 units (nine plow trucks and five motor graders). The number and types of equipment used may change over time due to budget constraints. Weekends and holidays will receive a reduced level of service due to lower traffic volumes and the limited resources available.

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1. Key Commuter Routes: Plowing used in combination with abrasives and/or deicing chemicals over entire route as determined appropriate. Objective is to complete first pass in both lanes with plow and/or abrasives/deicing chemicals by 7:00 AM following a normal snowfall. During operations hours, plow when there is a significant accumulation that a plow can remove. These are primary roads with an ADT (Average Daily Traffic) of 1,500. Three plow trucks cover these routes in addition to their specified routes.
2. Secondary Commuter Routes: In addition to plowing of the entire route, abrasives and/or deicing chemicals used at curves, intersections and extensive build-up areas as required. Objective is to complete first pass in both lanes with plow and/or abrasives/deicing by 8:00 AM following a normal snowfall. During operations hours, plow when there is a significant accumulation that a plow can remove.
3. Other County Hard Surfaced Routes: In addition to plowing of the entire route, abrasives and/or deicing chemicals used at curves, intersections and extensive build-up areas as required. Objective is to complete first pass in both lanes with plow and/or abrasives/deicing by 9:00 AM following a normal snowfall. During operations hours, plow when there is a significant accumulation that a plow can remove.
4. Gravel Surfaced County Route: Cleared by plowing. Generally abrasives and deicing chemicals are not used. Objective is to complete a single pass with plow by 1:00 PM following a normal snowfall. Supervisor may elect not to plow for very light snowfalls or when unfrozen gravel conditions exist. Generally, plow when there is an accumulation in excess of three inches.

Work for other political subdivisions and private parties: Snow removal work may be performed for other political subdivisions and private parties on a reimbursable basis as equipment and labor availability permits. Rates should be determined by the department head. Operators should complete the first pass in both directions of assigned routes prior to performing any non-county work. A written agreement should be signed by a representative of the political subdivision or private individual prior to completion of any reimbursable snow removal work.

**RESIDENTIAL PLOWING:** Landowners are asked not to push snow into the right-of-way, which includes the roadway, in slopes, ditch bottoms, backslopes, and around mailboxes of any public roadway, including the portion of the driveway within the public right-of-way. Keeping snow out of these areas reduces the risk of drifting snow and creates better visibility for motorists and provides room for future snowfall. This includes State, County and Township roadways. Pursuant to NDCC 24-06-28, state law prohibits a person from obstructing, or causing to be obstructed, any public highway or right-of-way.

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**STRANDED MOTORISTS:** Plow operators may assist stranded motorists if contacted by local law enforcement. Plow operators will not attempt to remove a stuck vehicle unless directed by law enforcement or it poses a danger to the traveling public or hinders snow removal operations.

**NO TRAVEL ADVISORY:** No travel advisories issued by the State Patrol and/or Sheriff's Office shall apply to all County snow and ice removal crews. In accordance with NDCC 39- 10-21.1 Closing Road because of hazardous conditions, County Road 1 O between Mapleton and West Fargo may be closed when conditions warrant the road to be closed for the protection and safety of the general public.

**PERSONAL PROPERTY:** It is recognized that some damage to mailboxes/roadside signs, etc. is unavoidable. When private property is damaged by County operations, the County will attempt to repair, replace, or restore damaged property, as appropriate, to as close to its original condition as is practical. The damage will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis and only items that were damaged by actual contact with County equipment may be repaired at the County's expense provided they were located and installed properly.

Courthouse Parking Lots:  
Objectives are:

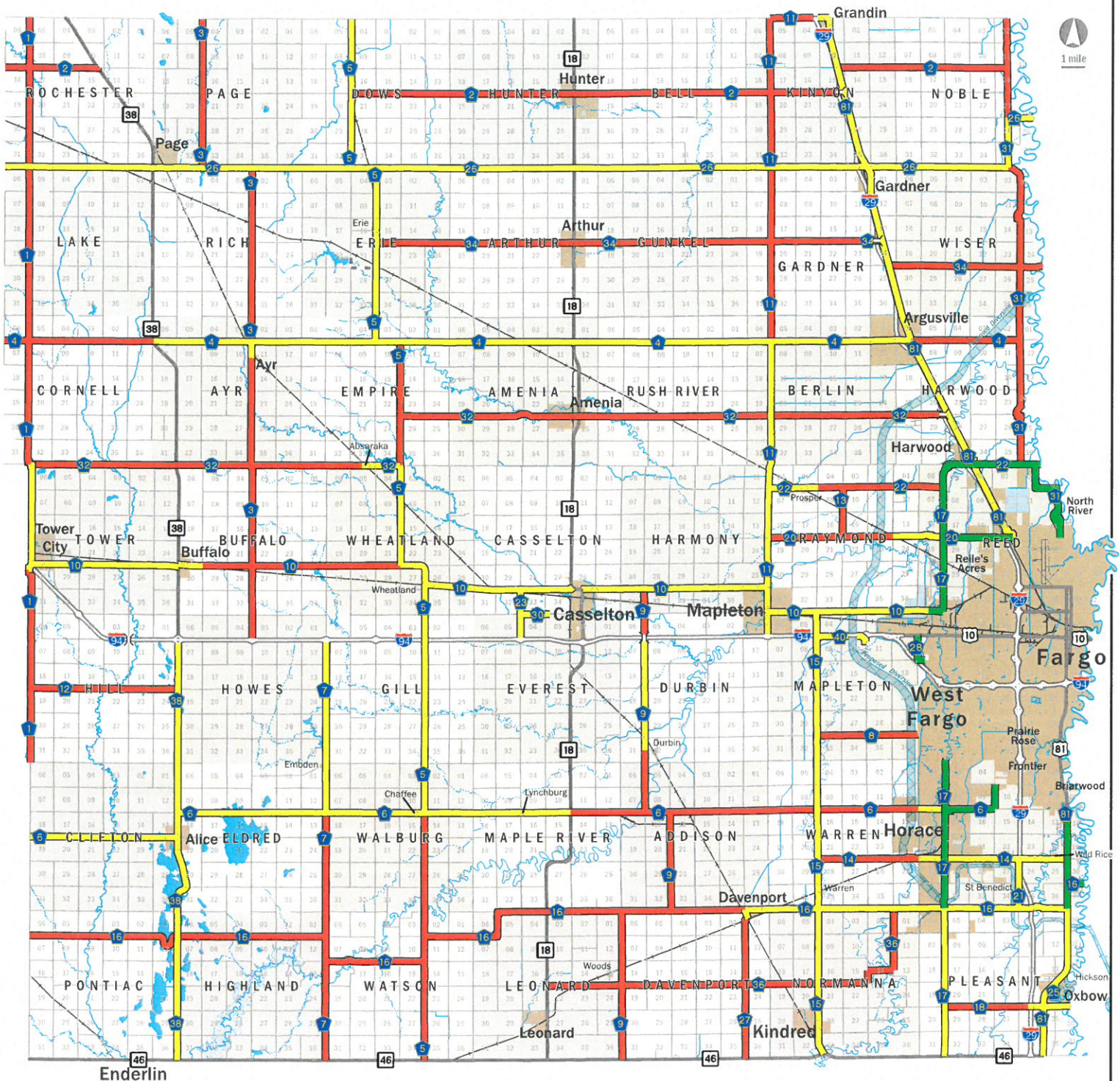
1. Clear all parking lots by 7:00 AM Monday through Friday. Daytime clearing will be done when accumulation is sufficient to significantly impede courthouse visitors or employees.
2. Maintain reasonable 24 hour, 7 day per week access and parking to the Jail and Juvenile Detention Facilities.

Weekend clearing of other employee parking areas is not required provided that lots are cleaned by 7:00 AM Monday.

**RECORDS:** AVL/GPS records are available for time stamps regarding completion times for snow removal activities. Service requests or complaints from citizens should be recorded.

HISTORICAL REFERENCE DATE: NOVEMBER 20, 1995

# Cass County Highway Department SNOW REMOVAL ROUTES



map updated November 2023



**Key Commuter Routes:** Plowing used in combination with abrasives and/or deicing chemicals over entire route as determined appropriate. Objective is to complete first pass in both lanes with plow and/or abrasive/deicing chemicals by 7:00 AM following a normal snowfall. During operations hours, plows operate when there is a significant accumulation that a plow can remove.



**Secondary Commuter Routes:** In addition to plowing of the entire route, abrasives and/or deicing chemicals used at curves, intersections and extensive build-up areas as required. Objective is to complete first pass in both lanes with plow and/or abrasives/deicing by 9:00 AM following a normal snowfall. During operation hours, plows operate when there is a significant accumulation that a plow can remove.



**Gravel Surfaced County Routes:** Cleared by plowing. Generally abrasives and deicing chemicals are not used. Objective is to complete a single pass with plow by 1:00 PM following a normal snowfall. Supervisor may elect not to plow for very light snowfalls or when unfrozen gravel conditions exist. Generally plows operate when there is an accumulation in excess of 3 inches.



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For more information visit: <https://www.casscountynd.gov/our-county/highway/road-and-bridge-maintenance>