



## **Winter Maintenance**

***Town of Acton  
Highway Department  
(978) 929-7740***

### **Acton's Storm Strategy**

The Town of Acton Highway Department has over 100 miles of roads to maintain. In an effort to make the snow season as safe as possible, we offer the following tips and information. Please remember that each storm is different so our strategy must be adjusted accordingly to achieve the best results.

The Town of Acton is not responsible for the maintenance of Route 2, Route 2A, or Route 111. These roads are maintained by the State Highway Department. Questions or concerns regarding these roads should be directed to the District 3 Office of the Massachusetts Highway Department at (508) 929-3800.

The Highway Department is devoted to providing its residents with dependable snow removal operations in the least amount of time. With your cooperation we will all benefit during the snow season.

### **When The Storm Begins**

When a snowstorm begins the Department responds by treating all roads with deicing chemicals. Treating the road surfaces serves two purposes. It prevents snow and ice from bonding to the surface and keeps traffic flowing. Treating the roads takes approximately 2 ½ - 3 hours. Please remember that our crews have to travel on snow covered, slippery untreated roads to get here at any hour of the day or night. Please be patient as the crews will be out as soon as possible to begin the operations.

### **During The Storm**

Plowing operations begin when there is an accumulation of 3 to 5 inches of snow on road surfaces. Depending upon the severity of the storm, Town forces are assisted by hired contractors to expedite the process of snow removal. Each vehicle is assigned to a pre-determined route and will remain there until the storm subsides unless an emergency occurs that requires reassignment of equipment from one location to another. The main objective is to keep all roads passable during the storm. Unfortunately, it is not possible to keep the roads free of snow without filling in many driveways; therefore, when you clean the end of your driveway deposit the excess snow to the downstream side of your driveway. This will minimize the redeposit of snow into the cleared opening when the plow makes its next pass

Please do not shovel, plow or blow snow or ice into the roadway. It is not only illegal, but can be a serious traffic hazard. If you have a private contractor plowing your driveway please make sure to remind them of this as you will be held responsible for their actions.

Once the snow has stopped, all roads are scraped and widened sufficiently in anticipation of future storms and for public safety.

### **Following The Storm**

After plowing is completed roads are given a final treatment of deicing chemical. In the days following a storm, scraping and treating of roads continues depending upon weather forecasts. If colder weather is forecast, streets must be scraped of snow and slush to prevent icing of the surface when the temperature drops and also to widen the road edge so that drainage structures are exposed if the temperatures rise and melting occurs. As time allows, snow is removed from intersections where sight distance is a concern.

### **Sidewalks**

Normally, sidewalks are plowed during the storm and scraped in the following days if needed. Sidewalks in the school zones are given first priority, after which all connector sidewalks are plowed. After storms of above average nature, sidewalk snow blowers are needed to clear the heavy accumulations. This is a slow process and in many instances takes several days to complete. We ask that you do not block sidewalks with snow shoveled or plowed from your driveway.

### **Winter Parking Ban**

Residents are reminded that a winter parking ban is in effect from November 1 until April 1. On street parking is not allowed between the hours of 1:00 a.m. and 6:00 a.m. The parking ban also includes the Municipal Parking areas located behind the W. Acton Fire Station (258 Central St), S. Acton Fire Station (54 School St), Railroad St, rail trail terminus at Maple St, and at the end of Sylvia St.

Vehicles that are illegally parked will be ticketed and towed at the owner's expense if they interfere with snow removal operations. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

### **Fire Hydrants**

Fire hydrants are under the control of the Acton Water District. The Water District asks residents with hydrants in front of or near their property to please clear the snow away from the area so that in an emergency the hydrant will be accessible. Questions regarding snow removal near hydrants should be directed to the Acton Water District at (978) 263-9107.

### **Recycling and Trash Containers**

If residents have private curbside pickup of recyclables or trash, please ensure that the containers do not interfere with snow removal efforts.

### **Sand and Salt**

A mixture of sand and salt is available to residents (no contractors) at the designated area located behind the Highway Department at 14 Forest Road. Follow the signs to the area designated for residents. Please use caution while entering and exiting as vehicles and equipment are prevalent. Please bring your own shovel and container.

### **Town Right of Way**

Homeowners should be aware that in most instances they do not own the land up to the edge of road pavement or sidewalk. The Town generally owns the land 8 feet from the road edge and at least 1 foot from the back of the sidewalk. There may be underground utilities within these areas and homeowners should be careful as to what they place in these areas. Trees, shrubbery, fences, lawn sprinkler systems or gardens within the right of way may be damaged during snow removal operations.

The Town will not be responsible for damage to such items within the right of way.

### **Mailboxes and Basketball Nets**

Please refer to the Town of Acton's Mailbox policy that was adopted October 2014.

Basketball posts and nets that have been placed on the edge of the road and overhang areas to be plowed are another area of concern for operators. These have caused damage to Town vehicles and must be removed before the snow season begins. Again, the Town cannot be held responsible for damage to posts or backboards and will remove them if they interfere with snow removal operations.

### **Spring Repairs**

Sometimes the grass strips and curbs along the roads are damaged while plowing. The Highway Department works to repair these areas as soon as possible; however other work that involves the safety of the public takes priority. It may take until mid summer to repair these areas. The repair of grass surfaces generally consists of raking out the ruts and seeding with a standard highway grass seed. If your landscaping needs are such that this is unacceptable, **you may choose to repair these areas on your own earlier in the spring.**

### **Street Sweeping**

Part of the Highway Department's maintenance program involves cleaning the road surfaces and drains. The road surfaces and sidewalks are cleaned with mechanical sweepers during the spring months (end of March to the middle of May). The Highway Department first cleans the highly visible areas such as the town centers and the Isaac Davis Trail. Most roads are swept once during this period to insure we are in compliance with environmental regulations that are in place to protect our wetlands and streams.

The Highway Department no longer uses sand to treat the roads during winter. Residents, however, may rake residual sand from previous years onto the road surface for pickup by the sweepers. **Do it early before the road is swept! Place the sand in a long row rather than a big pile. Do not mix lawn wastes, trash, tree limbs, etc in with the sand as it may damage the machinery. The operator will not remove such material, leaving an unsightly mess for you and your neighbors.**

The Highway Department takes considerable pride in Acton's clean, well maintained attractive streets. Your continued cooperation in making this happen is very much appreciated.



## **Snow & Ice Mailbox Replacement Policy**

Mailboxes installed in the Town right of way are placed at the owner's risk. Each mailbox installation should be sufficiently solid to withstand snow-clearing efforts by the Town. It is the responsibility of the owner of the mailbox to clear the snow around the mailbox to assure mail delivery by the U.S. Postal Department. If the snow banks are too high to shovel, place a temporary box beside the road until the snow has melted enough to allow access to the mailbox.

The mailbox should be installed, periodically inspected and maintained by the homeowner in accordance with the guidelines provided by the United States Post Office ([www.USPS.com](http://www.USPS.com)). When installing a mailbox choose a suitable location. If you are unsure, check with the postal carrier.

The Town does not replace mailboxes if damaged by snow being discharged by the snowplow. The Town only assumes responsibility if a Town plow comes into contact with the mailbox or post.

The Town does not replace plastic mailboxes. Plastic mailboxes in cold weather become very brittle and are not well-suited to withstand this type of environment. The Town also does not replace mailboxes that are in need of repair due to lack of maintenance, vandalism or have a spike-type support. Homeowners should check the condition of their mailbox and post before the ground freezes and make any necessary repairs. **The Town will not be responsible for damage to any mailbox or post if the front of the box extends past the curb line and/or is within 6-inches from the curb line.**

The Town will only replace mailboxes if the Town's plow came in contact with a well-maintained mailbox or post. The Highway Superintendent, or their designee, will inspect the reported damage to determine the cause of the damage to the mailbox and/or the post. If the Superintendent, or their designee, determines that the damage is a result of the Town plow hitting the mailbox or post, the Town staff will attempt to make the necessary repairs. If the mailbox or post is deemed non-repairable by the Highway Department staff, the Homeowner may choose from one of the two options listed below:

- the Town will replace the damaged mailbox and/or post with a standard-style metal mailbox and/or wood post,

- the homeowner may opt to furnish and install their own mailbox and post and the Town will reimburse them up to \$100 towards the replacement.

Mailboxes to be fixed will be put on a list and repaired when the Highway Department is back on a regular schedule and all other weather-related priorities are completed. **A CLAIM should be submitted to the Highway Superintendent immediately following the storm so that they can witness the damage and make their determination. LATE CLAIMS are difficult to verify and will likely be denied since the Highway Superintendent may not be able to adequately determine the cause of the damage.**