

Town of Ancram Highway Department
Winter Precipitation
Operations Plan
January 2020

Situation: All public roads in the Town of Ancram are vulnerable to winter precipitation, including snow, ice, sleet, freezing rain, and black ice. Such precipitation may vary in intensity from light, intermittent flurries to a full-blown blizzard and may vary in duration from a few minutes to several days. Strong winds may compound the negative effects of such precipitation as they scour some areas while creating deep drifts elsewhere. Temperatures may fluctuate during a few hours from biting cold to above freezing, and then plunge again to re-freeze moisture that had begun to thaw.

Objective: The Town of Ancram Highway Department will provide timely, effective, efficient, economical control and removal of snow and other winter precipitation hazards on town roads for the safety and benefit of Town residents and the motoring public. This plan provides guidance to accomplish that objective.

Standards: Maintaining a bare road surface that is completely free of all snow, ice, and other slippery precipitation is rarely possible during a significant winter storm or weather event. The Highway Department will do all it can to provide a road surface that allows reasonable vehicle operators operating with reasonable skill at reasonable speeds to maintain control. The Highway Department will also enable emergency fire and medical service providers to access persons and properties in need of emergency services.

Responsibility: Due to the many variables inherent in winter storms, each adverse weather event is likely to require somewhat different actions, timing, and emphasis for maintaining navigable roads. The Town Highway Superintendent has the sole authority and responsibility to determine where, when, and how Highway Department personnel, materiel, and equipment will be dispatched to accomplish objectives.

Priority: Highest priority will be given to the most heavily travelled roads. Some less travelled roads may be temporarily by-passed during heavy snow or ice conditions.

Timing & Type of Operations: As deemed necessary by the Superintendent of Highways, the Highway Department will normally begin snow and ice control operations at the onset of a winter weather event and will continue to treat and plow roads as necessary throughout the event. Depending upon the nature and intensity of the precipitation, road treatment operations may include:

- preventing an ice-pavement bond (anti-icing) Note: not suitable on unpaved surfaces;
- breaking an ice-pavement bond (de-icing);
- temporarily improving friction by applying abrasives (typically sand);
- plowing to remove accumulated snow and ice;
- or combinations of these actions.

For ice control, the Highway Department generally will use a mixture of 75% sand & 25% salt. This mixture may be adjusted depending on road and weather conditions. Departmental policy is to use the minimum amount of these materials necessary to maintain safe road surfaces. Unpaved roads will not be salted; if icy, unpaved roads will receive abrasives (sand or stone).

Plowing operations will generally consist of three phases:

1. Making roads passable;
2. Widening and treating the roads;
3. General clean-up.

Suspension of Operations: In extreme conditions, including but not limited to low visibility, severe winds, and extreme accumulations of ice/snow, continuing road clearance and treatment operations is an unacceptable safety risk to Highway Department vehicle operators and to the motoring public. During such conditions, the Highway Superintendent may temporarily suspend road treatment and clearance operations.

Coordination: The Highway Superintendent will provide contact information to the Chief of the Ancram Fire Company, to the Operations Supervisor of the Clauson Raught Community Rescue Squad, to the Columbia County 911 Emergency Communications Department, and to other area emergency responders, and will coordinate responsibilities and actions to ensure that emergency responders have access to persons and properties in need of emergency services.

Citizen Responsibilities: Most Town roads include a 50' right of way. This ROW often extends 10' or more from the road's edge. If a vehicle in the ROW obstructs snow/ice treatment and control operations, Law Enforcement will be notified and the vehicle will be towed at the owner's expense. Highway Department personnel may assist stranded motorists only by contacting Law Enforcement or other emergency personnel.

Also, NYS Vehicle & Traffic Law 1219 says that "No person shall throw or deposit upon any highway any...snow....Any person who drops, permits to be dropped or thrown, upon any highway...any material which interferes with the safe use of the highway [e.g. snow] shall immediately remove the same or cause it to be removed...."

Snow or other debris must not be plowed from private roads/driveways onto any public road or its ROW.