

SNOW & ICE CONTROL
OPERATIONAL POLICY

South
Whitehall
Township

PREPARED BY: HERB BENDER

12/27/2023

FORWARD

This plan has been modeled after plans of other Townships, similar in size and geographics, but has been modified to suit the needs of South Whitehall Township. This plan is not to be considered a “cure-all” solution to every problem encountered during a snowstorm. Every snow and ice storm are different and must be dealt with on a case-by-case basis. This document serves as a working guide for the staff to use in the planning and implementation of snow and ice control operations. As you read this document, remember that it is the product of several years of experience upon which decisions were made.

Each year, a great deal of time and money is expended for snow and ice removal. Unfortunately, at the end of each winter, we have nothing to show for the effort, except for the safety of our residents and each motorist on our roadways.

GOAL

It is the goal of this snow and ice control program to provide, to the best of our ability, the residents and motorists of South Whitehall Township with safe driving conditions upon the completion of snow and ice control operations. Every attempt possible will be made to complete these operations in a timely and safe manner.

PURPOSE

It is the purpose of this document to serve as a guideline and to define the policies and procedures used by the Public Works Department in its response to snow and ice control problems. This plan should also allow Township officials to understand the snow removal process practiced by the Department of Public Works.

To provide the greatest impact and safest conditions to our community, our response will be aimed at serving the greatest number of people in the shortest period. The first streets to be serviced will be snow emergency routes, followed by the secondary roads, and the Township does not plow alleys.

SNOW AND ICE CONTROL OPERATIONAL POLICY

Operational responsibility for snow and ice control will be divided between the Superintendent of Maintenance and the Superintendent of Public Works. Overall administration will be carried out by the Director of Township Operations under the general supervision of the Township Manager. Operational supervision and planning will be carried out by people indicated later in this policy.

STREETS

Snow and ice control for all Township streets shall be under the guidance of the Superintendent who will assume responsibility for reviewing, updating and recommending changes in the plan. During pending snow or actual operations, the General Service Group Leader will consult with the Director of Operations to ensure a coordinated response to the winter driving conditions. The actual snow and ice control operations will be handled by two teams of drivers/operators who will provide full, around-the-clock snow activities. Each team will be supervised by the General Service Group Leader and Director of Township Operations who will check route conditions, assist drivers with problems, and advise on current conditions in the field.

Advance forecasts for winter weather and driving conditions will be obtained through a private forecasting system (Weather Pros). This computer-generated weather data will be checked on a periodic basis daily. Weather information will also be gathered from local observations and the National Weather Service.

The following operational guidelines will be followed in the day-to-day response to winter weather conditions:

Weather conditions will be monitored by the persons listed above and, whenever possible, employees will be advised of pending weather through the posting of notices at the time clock in the public works lunchroom. These notices will identify the approximate time at which operations will begin.

During normal working hours (non-holiday weekdays, 0700-1530 hours) the ranking Public Works Department/Director of Township Operations and the General Service Group Leader will determine when operations will begin.

After normal hours, or during holidays, the Police Department shift commander will contact the Director of Township Operations and advise them of the adverse

weather conditions. The Director of Township Operations and the General Service Group Leader will determine what operations are needed and when they will commence. If efforts to contact the Director of Township Operations are unsuccessful, contact should be made with the General Service Group Leader.

Public Works personnel will be divided into two "*teams*" to better provide full, around the clock service to the Township. Personnel assigned to routes plowing or salting streets will be assigned to the teams in each district. Each team will be assigned a period when it will be the primary team for attacking inclement winter weather conditions.

To address unusual weather conditions and to provide for sufficient rest periods and reduce driver fatigue, regular work hours may be modified. Personnel may be directed to report specifically for their plowing assignments at the assigned time rather than conforming to normal working hours. Such changes shall be implemented by the Director of Township Operations based on the best information available.

All personnel involved with snow removal operations will be under the general supervision of the General Service Group Leader.

Once assigned to an operational district, drivers are not to leave that area unless directed by the Director of Township Operations or the General Service Group Leader. **Drivers shall report when they are leaving their route or their vehicle, and when they have returned.** Drivers may request permission to take meal breaks or rest breaks from the General Service Group Leader.

When leaving the public works garage to begin or resume operations, the driver will report his status to General Service Group Leader.

All personnel shall periodically report to snow command on the status of roads cleared. Notification shall also be given when a route is complete. Before leaving a completed route, the driver will notify the General Service Group Leader and determine if his assistance is required in another district.

The appropriate rate of salt/de-icer shall be established by the Director of Township Operations or the General Service Group Leader. Drivers will be advised of this rate when they are given their route maps. Any change in the application rate must be approved by the Director of Township Operations or the General Service Group Leader.

Unless otherwise instructed, all streets shall be plowed from curb to curb or to their maximum width. All intersections shall be cleared of snow during initial plowing operation. Cul-de-sacs shall be cleared of all snow, and every effort should be made to avoid piling snow on driveways, mailboxes and hydrants in cul-de-sacs. The General Service Group Leader may change this practice as each storm dictates.

Drivers involved in an accident shall notify the General service Group Leader of the fact and check to see if anyone is injured. Unless otherwise directed, vehicles shall be left where they are until police arrive on the scene.

When drivers change shifts, the driver leaving will brief the oncoming driver of his route status, vehicle status, and other information as needed. Drivers are a team and shall make every effort to coordinate their efforts to provide the highest possible service to the residents of South Whitehall Township.

Once operations are complete, the driver shall clean out the vehicle and prepare it for the next operation. This will include dumping the salt/de-icer load if necessary, cleaning out the spreader, washing of the vehicle and frame and refilling all fluids. A check of the plow and the frame shall also be done. For further directions, see the attached policy on salt storage/usage operation.

MUNICIPAL COMPLEX/SIDEWALKS

The clearing of snow and ice from the municipal complex and township owned sidewalks shall be under the guidance of the General Service Group Leader.

Levels of response will be determined by the General Service Group Leader, including the use of de-icers, brooming, snow blowing, etc. The workers will coordinate the activities as closely as possible with the General Service Group Leader to work together effectively.

The parking lots that are used for police car parking will be cleared at such a time as the General Service Group Leader is notified by the shift commander that the lots have been cleared of vehicles. Moving police vehicles will be the responsibility of police personnel. The Police Department is to be notified upon completion of the clearing operations.

Clearing operations shall initiate with the immediate area around the service garage and municipal building and then move out to the parking areas and driveways.

When severe conditions occur, with the agreement of the Director of Township Operations, personnel assigned to municipal/sidewalk clearing may be reassigned to the clearing of streets.

WATER STATIONS/SANITARY SEWER STATIONS

The clearing of snow and ice from the water and sanitary sewer stations shall be under the guidance of the Utility Coordinator of the South Whitehall Township Utility Division. The Crew Leader will coordinate his activities as closely as possible with the Utility Coordinator to work together effectively.

When severe conditions occur, with the agreement of the Utility Coordinator, personnel assigned to water and sanitary sewer stations clearing may be reassigned to the clearing of streets.

FIRE COMPANIES/AMBULANCE CORPS

The clearing of snow and ice from the three Fire Companies and one Ambulance Corp. shall be under the guidance of the General Service Group Leader.

At the onset of winter weather conditions all Fire Companies and Ambulance Corps. garage entrances and parking areas for emergency response personnel will be treated with salt to prevent icing and additional snow accumulation. If the storm is of the severity where plowing is required, the above areas will have snow accumulation removed to allow access by emergency vehicles and emergency personnel.

If at such a time the storm would reach blizzard conditions a South Whitehall Township plow truck would be assigned to each Fire Company and Ambulance Corp. to aid in the escort of emergency vehicles. This would be done under the supervision of the Director of Township Operations.

PARKS, TRAILS & PUBLIC SPACES

The clearing of snow and ice from the Parks, Trails and Public Spaces shall be under the guidance of the General Service Group Leader of the South Whitehall Township Public Works division. The Crew Leader will coordinate his activities as closely as possible with the General Service Group Leader to work together effectively.

When severe conditions occur, with the agreement of the General Service Group Leader, personnel assigned to Park, Trails and Public Spaces clearing may be reassigned to the clearing of streets.

PRE-PLANNING

Prior to December 1st

All snow and ice control equipment and supplies are to be checked and pre-winter maintenance performed. Salt should be ordered to top off the stockpile: all spare parts which are needed for salting and plowing operation should be in order; the salt wetting system should be checked and filled if necessary and the snow policy reviewed for needed updates or corrections.

All snow routes will be reviewed, and changes will be made where needed. Snow control teams will be assigned to routes and equipment.

"Snow Day" will be scheduled, all concerned parties invited, and an agenda prepared.

Prior to December 15th

Drivers are to be familiarized with their equipment, routes are to be driven and test runs made by each driver to ensure familiarity. This will occur during the annual *"snow day"*, and additional time will be given if needed.

Any obstructions or dangerous areas should be marked with a distinguishing marker and reported to the General Service Group Leader.

All experienced personnel should be reminded of plowing and salting procedures and take the time to review the overall snow plans.

New operators shall be trained in the operation of snow and ice control equipment and assigned to an experienced operator in the same district.

Salt spreaders shall be mounted and checked for proper operation.

All snowplows shall be mounted and checked for proper operation.

Garage and storage areas should be re-arranged so equipment can be stored in their winter locations.

WEATHER CONDITIONS

The following weather condition advisory system will be used to inform Public Works of pending weather conditions. These notices will be posted as soon as forecasts and information are available. Personnel are advised that this system is only intended to help guide the employee. Each employee has a responsibility to keep advised of weather forecasts and conditions.

Coating to 2" - Salting event snowstorm - Public works will handle the salting of township roads.

3" to 5" - Minor snowstorm - Public works and will handle salting and, if necessary, plowing of township roads.

6" to 12" - Moderate snowstorm - Public Works will handle salting and plowing and snow removal (if needed) of township roads.

12" to 18" - Heavy snowstorm - Public Works will handle salting and plowing and snow removal with possibility of outsourced help with snow removal.

18" and UP - Blizzard type storm - Public Works will salt and plow the township roads with possible help of outsourced plowing help. Public Works will also do snow removal with the possibility of outsourced help.