

## **Snow and Ice Removal**

The Eau Claire Highway Department is responsible for the snow and ice removal (referred to as snow removal) of approximately 839.68 lane miles of County Trunk Highways, 91 lane mile of Township roads and an additional 539.46 lane miles of State Highways through contract with the WisDOT. Snow removal activities may occur any time of the day or night and likely require overtime by the Highway Department personnel. Careful planning and preparation must be done prior to the winter season to ensure the safe and efficient snow removal throughout Eau Claire County.

### ***Purpose***

The purpose of this section is to define the level of expectations for snow and ice removal of County maintained roads during a winter storm event. The primary goal of winter maintenance is to achieve “passable roadways” within the limitations imposed by climatological conditions, the availability of resources, and environmental concerns during a winter storm event.

### ***Snow Removal Procedures***

The following section outlines the snow removal procedures used by the Eau Claire County Highway Department. Exceptions to this policy may occasionally be necessary as dictated by weather and road conditions.

### **Decision to Begin Snow Removal**

Several factors impact when the Highway Department begins the snow removal process. These factors include, but are not limited to, current roadway conditions, current weather conditions, forecasted weather conditions, and the time of day. Each storm presents unique challenges which must be dealt with accordingly. Given the overall size of Eau Claire County, it is possible for weather and road conditions to vary greatly from one area of the County to another area. The Highway Department will take all factors into consideration and will make a determination on the appropriate time to begin the snow removal process. Snow removal will begin on County roads when there is 2” of accumulation or more. County roads that connect to 24 hours service routes, such as State highway or City arterials will receive treatment at less than 2”.

### **Snow Removal Methods**

The primary method of snow removal shall be by plowing. Salt, sand/salt or salt with other additives may be used to enhance snow removal or to improve traction. Motorists should expect that snow will be plowed into cross streets and driveways as a normal part of snow removal operations.

### **Passable Roadway**

The intent of the snow removal process within Eau Claire County is to maintain a safe environment for the traveling public. This does not mean that the traveled portion of a roadway will be cleared to the pavement. In fact, the public should be aware that the traveled

portion of a roadway and/or bridges will, at times, have snow and/or ice which will create slippery conditions. Motorists should be aware of these conditions and should exercise caution when driving during these conditions.

The goal of the Highway Department is to create a "passable roadway." A passable roadway is defined as a roadway surface that is free from drifts, snow ridges, and as much ice and snow pack as is practical and can be traveled safely at reasonable speeds. A passable roadway should not be confused with a "dry pavement" or "bare pavement", which is essentially free of all ice, snow, and any free moisture from shoulder to shoulder. This "dry/bare pavement" condition may not exist during winter weather conditions and may not be attained until weather conditions improve to the point where this pavement condition can be provided.

The definition of "reasonable speed" is considered a speed that a vehicle can travel without losing traction. During and immediately after a winter storm event, a reasonable speed will most likely be lower than the posted speed limit. Motorists can expect some inconvenience and will be expected to modify their driving practices to suit road conditions.

### **Level of Service and Hours of Operation**

The level of snow removal service depends on the type of roadway being serviced. The Highway Department maintains both State and County roadways. These roadways are divided into three (3) classes which determine the priority, level of service, and hours of operation. The three classes of roads shall be serviced as described in the following.

#### *Class One (1) Roads*

Class one (1) roads are defined as Interstate highways and other major state routes. These roadways are subject to specific service WisDOT requirements. These roadways may be serviced twenty-four hours, seven days per week. For additional information you may view the WisDOT website at:

**<http://www.dot.wisconsin.gov/travel/road/winterbrochure.htm>**

#### *Class Two (2) Roads*

Class Two (2) roads are defined as those routes having an average daily traffic (ADT) volume of 1,000 vehicles or more. Snow plowing services on class two roads will include regular service (4:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.), reduced service (9:00 p.m. to 4:00 a.m.), and emergency service.

#### *Class Three (3) Roads*

Class Three (3) roads are defined as those routes having an ADT volume of less than 1,000 vehicles. Snow plowing services on class three roads typically include regular service (4:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.) and emergency service primarily during the hours of 6:00 p.m. to 4:00 a.m.

The majority of snow removal within Eau Claire County will occur between the hours of 4:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. It should be noted that these service hours are provided as a guideline and may be modified on a case-by-case basis. With the exception of twenty-four roadways, the Highway Department will provide reduced service on County and Township Roads beginning at 6:00 p.m. The Highway Department will also provide emergency service between 6:00 p.m. and 4:00 a.m. primarily at the request of the Eau Claire County Sheriff's Department. The Highway Department maintains communication with the Sheriff's Department and will respond to specific requests of the Sheriff's Department.