

Snow Plowing and Winter Road Condition Questions

Here are answers to the most commonly asked snow plowing and winter road condition questions.

Please look through these questions first before calling. During storms, we are often very busy and want to use our time (and your tax money) effectively by focusing on plowing rather than answering duplicative questions from residents. These answers will better inform you about our snow removal policies and procedures. If you have a medical emergency, please contact us immediately.

What is a “Snow Alert?”

The City of Harrisburg will declare a “Snow Alert” when an accumulation of 2” is either forecast for the city or should the city have no prior forecast warning, when the snow plows are dispatched. This could also include blowing or drifting snow that would require plowing. We will issue a starting time and ending time for the alert and depending on the conditions may extend or lift it.

How is a Snow Alert Communicated?

The City of Harrisburg communicates via several mediums including:

CodeRED notifications – Emergency phone, text or email notification. If you haven’t registered please do so by visiting the City of Harrisburg’s website at www.harrisburgsd.gov and clicking on CodeRED. This notification will be your fastest notification.

City Website

Facebook

KELO-TV

KSFY-TV

RESULTS RADIO

Why can't you plow my street first?

We wish we had enough snowplows and drivers to take care of every street right away, but our resources are limited and so we must adhere to a carefully laid out system for clearing the streets. If we allowed our plows to be diverted each time a special request was made, it would take far longer to get all the streets in the city cleared. To keep our snow removal operations as effective and efficient as possible, plows are not permitted to deviate from their assigned routes. Our Primary Snow Route streets hold first priority for snow plowing. This is Harrisburg’s Primary Snow Route [Map](#).

Can you tell me exactly when my street will be plowed?

Under ideal circumstances, we can predict fairly accurately when we will have streets in various sections of the City plowed. As weather conditions change we often must alter our snow-fighting strategy in the midst of the snow removal operations in order to control drifting snow, ice or other special problems. We cannot give you an estimate of when your street will be cleared due to ever-changing weather conditions.

Why don't the trucks plow and sand/salt on the way to their routes?

Each snowplow has an assigned route. If the trucks spread sand/salt on their way to their destination, then they wouldn't have enough to spread along their own route. Plowing along the way would mean it would be just that much longer until the truck reached its assigned route. Spreading/sand salt occurs after streets have been plowed.

Who is responsible for plowing Willow and Cliff?

Willow and Cliff are both maintained by Lincoln County. The city has worked with the county over the last couple of years to store a plow in Harrisburg to expedite access to the northern part of Lincoln County. This year, Lincoln County has also added new resources to accommodate snow falls during odd hours (after 5 pm to 6 am). To report County Road Problems, call (541) 265-5747. Additionally, please be respectful to ALL road crews. Given the amount of area that needs to be covered, please understand that not everyone can be served first.

What about cul-de-sacs?

Cul-de-sacs present plowing problems ranging from difficult to impossible. A plow can easily cut an 11-foot path through the snow on a straight road surface, but trying to plow and turn the blade in a small circle in a cul-de-sac is very difficult and time consuming. The most efficient way to clean cul-de-sacs varies by neighborhood and may require us to come back at a later time to remove the pile of snow that has been created.

Why do you sometimes salt instead of plow, or plow instead of salt?

Different types of storms require the use of different snow-fighting techniques. The decision whether to salt or plow depends upon the expected weather conditions. For example, if the temperature is below 20 degrees and not expected to rise, salt will not be effective. But if the sun is shining and the temperature is 20 degrees or more and expected to remain steady or to rise, then salt would be more effective. The decision whether to plow or salt is made with great consideration and based on the latest weather information available. Plowing under the wrong conditions can create a polished street surface, resulting in dangerous glare ice. The decisions made by our experienced crew and supervisory personnel are critical.

The plow left some snow at the end of my driveway. Why can't the city just move it?

There are approximately 2,000 driveways in Harrisburg. If we used all of our plows and spent just 60 seconds per driveway, it would take several days to clean driveways alone. One thing you can do to minimize the problem is to pile snow that has been shoveled from the driveway on the downstream side of the driveway. Then if the snowplow hits the pile, it will be moved onto the grass or sidewalk, not back into your driveway.

When is parking prohibited on city streets?

When a snow alert is declared, the city lists "begin" and "end" times. Any time during the snow alert period cars can be ticketed and/or towed.

I got a ticket but my neighbor didn't. How does that happen?

The Lincoln County Sheriff's office serves several capacities during a snow alert. They can start ticketing but be called to an accident or some other emergency and return hours later to continue ticketing. Thus, it is not a continual process and we remind residents that ticketing and towing can happen any time during the snow event... even if the street has already been cleared.

If the street has been cleared, why can I still get a ticket?

Our snow plows and truck make several passes on the roads and need access to all streets (secondary roads, cul de sacs, etc.) during the entire event. That is the reason for the "end" time. Please note that conditions change and sometimes the "end" time needs to be extended. It is your responsibility to stay informed of any changes.