

Town of North Smithfield

Department of Public Works – Highway Division

Snow and Ice Removal Policy

This information is provided to help everyone understand the Town of North Smithfield's policy on winter snow storms, our procedures for sanding, plowing, parking bans, mailboxes, recycling bins, trash, driveways and windrows. Who is responsible, how you can help and who do you call?

THE TOWN follows weather reports and observes conditions if there is a threat of a storm. The Director calls in the snow crews initially to spread material on the primary and connector roads, intersections, hills and school bus routes, depending on the time of day or night. Our priority is to keep these roads passable for emergency services, such as Police, Fire and Rescue.

The crews begin to plow when the snow has reached a 2"- 3" depth, and the same priority is followed, primary roads first, side streets and cul-de-sacs last (usually). The Town is divided into 13 assigned districts and each district's driver will follow a pattern until a complete circuit has been opened up. When the storm ends, the drivers go back and widen the roads, pushing back the snow beyond the edge of the road. If needed, more material is applied to the plowed roads.

LEVEL OF SERVICE – The Town of North Smithfield does not have a bare road policy; Plowing and sanding operations are intended to provide the prudent motorist with reasonably safe driving conditions. The motorist will need to drive to the conditions that are present and limit unnecessary trips.

PARKING BAN – The Police Department, after consulting with the Director of Public Works, will usually institute a parking ban on town streets whenever plowable snow is forecast. Bans are announced by the local media – TV and radio and the town's web site but should be considered to be in effect during most snowstorms. Your vehicle may be towed (at your expense) if it is parked in violation of the ban. If your car is off the road, the plows can clear the roads more efficiently and quickly. The parking ban stays in effect until the plowing is complete.

THROWING (debris) SNOW ON ROADS – State Law Title 31-22-9. This law means that when you shovel or plow out your driveway or sidewalk; do not throw the snow in the road so as to constitute a hazard (or it having to be re-plowed). If you hire a contractor to plow/shovel your driveway, please advise them of this regulation – they may be unaware of this law. When the plow trucks go by, they generate **windrows** – the pesky ridge of snow at the bottom of your driveways. We do not do this intentionally – it is a byproduct of plowing, and we ask that if you shovel it before the end of the storm, that you cast it to the right of your driveway (facing the street) into your yard to minimize another windrow when the plow returns, helping to keep the road and your driveway clear. Unless there is a huge, unmovable windrow, it is the resident's responsibility to clear the passage. Sometimes we make mistakes and are willing to correct the problem.

LAWN/PROPERTY EDGES – Within the Town's right-of-way, plow-damaged area will be raked out loamed and seeded in warmer weather. Please call us or check the town's web site for more information and let us know the location.

MAILBOXES – When your mailbox is laying down on the job, it's usually the victim of heavy snow thrown by a moving plow. Sometimes it may have been damaged by a plow because of poor visibility during the storm, or unfortunately, a hit-and-run. Mailboxes are installed within the right-of-way at the owner's risk. There are precautions you can take to protect your mailbox, such as inspecting the post to make sure it is not rotted, post markers, or place it as far back from the edge of the road as allowable by Post Office standards. If the Town assumes responsibility for the damage, your mailbox will be replaced with a black standard version and wooden post as directed by the policy of the Town Administrator, Executive Order 05-01. New posts have to wait for warmer weather, but we will do what we can to help. Please check the town's web site for more information.

TRASH/RECYCLING BINS – MTG Disposal, the town's contracted trash and recycling company, decides if and when to pull the trucks from the road during storms. Stay tuned to media outlets or the town's web site for any cancellations. Please keep your bins curbside, not in the road where they would create an obstacle and safety hazard for the plows and other vehicles. Please take in your empty bins as soon as possible so the wind does not blow them around.

STORM DRAINS/CATCH BASINS – Melting snow can create a flooding problem if leaves and debris cover the opening. If you are aware of a problem area, please call the Highway Division with the location and we will respond as quickly as possible to remedy the situation.

PERSONAL SAFETY – If you do not have to go out during the storm, please stay home and enjoy it! If you do go out, be observant of the road conditions and do not pass the snowplows. Please keep children away from road edges during storms and until clean-up operations are completed. If you know someone in your neighborhood that is elderly, lives alone or has a medical condition, please be caring and give them a call or lend them a helping hand.

THE NATURE OF EACH STORM varies with temperature, wind, rate of snowfall, time of day, duration of storm, workday or weekend, and can present challenges. Light storms, heavy storms, blizzards, drifting snow, ice buildup on tree limbs and power lines are also a factor in how we 'attack' the clean-up operation. Other factors would be equipment availability, possible breakdowns, time for maintenance, refueling, manpower, and necessary 'rest' breaks. We appreciate your patience and cooperation, and if you have further questions, please give us a call.

Resident and Motorist Responsibilities:

1. Be alert and drive with caution, remember winter storms can create slick road conditions, maintain safe distances between vehicles and decrease your driving speed and allow additional time to stop.
2. Expect delays, allow extra driving time and please do not pass the plow trucks. Stay back 50' from the plow truck and do not crowd in behind them, the vehicle may reverse direction at intersections.
3. Park vehicles off the roadway, a parking ban will be in effect and the Police may tow vehicles that interfere with snow removal operations.
4. Teach children not to approach a plow truck and to not throw objects at the truck or into the roadway and do not allow them to play, sled or build snow forts in the road or within close proximity to the roadway.
5. Remove all basketball hoops, hockey goals, standard ramps or other items that should not be in the roadway. The Town of North Smithfield is not responsible for damage done to items left in the right-of-way.
6. Trees and other landscape features that are within the right-of-way and close to the edge of the roadway are not the responsibility of the Town if damage is done. The Town has the right to remove and trim trees, branches and shrubs that interfere and damage our equipment.

Department of Public Works – Highway Division

Director of Public Works – 767-2200 Ext. 341

Foremen – 767-2200 Ext. 343

Clerk – 767-2200 Ext. 348

Trash & Recycling – 767-2200 Ext. 348

Town Hall – 767-2200 Ext. 301