



Snow and Ice Control Program



Frequently Asked Questions

Q. When will my street be plowed?

A. Weather conditions frequently change during snowstorms, and therefore, so does the Village's snow plowing strategy. On average during a snow storm, snow plowing crews field 17 plows and work 12 hour shifts allowing for around-the-clock snow plowing until all 105 miles of Village streets and alleys are cleared.

Q. Why are side streets often covered with a layer of snow when main streets are clear?

A. The only way to completely remove snow and ice from streets is through the use of salt. Snow plowing alone will not remove all the snow. Main streets receive a steady flow of treatment from the combination of salting and heat generated from car tires, which help the salt to work. Depending upon weather conditions, the Village may decide to salt side street intersections or other streets and alleys.

Q. When does the Village begin spreading salt?

A. When a snowstorm begins, Village crews are immediately alerted by the Police Department. They begin spreading salt on main thoroughfares and other high volume and potentially dangerous areas, such as railroad crossings and school zones.

The initial salt application is used to prevent icing conditions which leads to a more effective snow plowing operation. After a two inch accumulation of snow, crews begin the actual snow plowing operation. When this is complete, salt that has been pretreated to help prevent icing conditions, is reapplied to the streets.

Q. Why is snow plowed onto my driveway?

A. The Village's snowplows are designed to unload snow to the side and are the fastest and most efficient means available to plow snow from the streets to provide for proper drainage, mailbox accessibility, and to allow clearance for future snow plowing. As a result, snow is discharged to the curb where driveways are located.

Q. Will the Village come back and plow the snow that was left on the driveway?

A. There are approximately 8,000 driveways in the Village. If the Village were to respond to every request to plow the snow from driveways, it would take several days to clean the driveways alone. With the resources available, it is simply not feasible to respond to these requests.

The Village suggests waiting until plows have cleared the street before cleaning the driveway apron. If possible, throw snow on the parkway to the right of the driveway (when facing the street). Subsequent snow plow passes will then push this extra snow away from the driveway rather than into the driveway.

Q. Is the Village responsible for plowing all the streets in Wilmette?

A. No. Cook County is responsible for snow and ice control on the following streets in Wilmette. Questions about service in these areas should be directed to Cook County, Highway District Two, at 847-827-1164.

- Lake Avenue (west of Ridge)
- Illinois Road (west of Locust)
- Hibbard Road (south of Skokie)
- Briar Drive
- Old Glenview (west of Edens Expressway)
- Happ Road (north of Illinois)
- Frontage Road (north of Illinois)

The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) is responsible for snow and ice control on the following streets in Wilmette. Questions about service in these areas should be directed to IDOT at 847-272-1246.

- Skokie Road
- Glenview Rd (between Skokie & Hunter/Crawford)
- Wilmette Ave (between Crawford & Ridge)
- Hibbard Road (north of Skokie)
- Ridge Road (north of Wilmette)
- Crawford Avenue (south of Wilmette)

Q. When will the Village plow snow from my cul-de-sac or alley?

A. Since all streets cannot be plowed at the same time, there is a priority system. The main thoroughfares and well-traveled routes such as those leading to schools and businesses are given top priority. Once these important roadways are clear, the Village begins to plow snow from side streets and cul-de-sacs.

If the snow accumulation is greater than four inches, crews will plow snow from alleys after the side streets and cul-de-sacs are clear. If it seems like it is taking a long time, a continuous snowfall weather condition is likely keeping the snow plowing crews busy plowing the main roads.

Q. If I encounter an emergency medical situation, will the Village plow my area first so an ambulance can get through?

A. Anyone requiring emergency medical assistance should call 9-1-1. Emergency dispatch personnel will handle any emergency request. Where an immediate emergency exists, the Public Works Department will work with dispatch personnel to ensure a quick response.

Q. Can the Village arrange for someone to shovel snow from my sidewalk and driveway?

A. Residents who need assistance with shoveling snow from sidewalks or driveways should contact WilWork, the Village's youth employment referral program. For a list of names, call 847-853-7609 or email wilwork@wilmette.com.

Q. What can I do to help?

A. Residents can do a number of things to help out during a snowstorm. By law, residents are not allowed to deposit snow onto any street once it has been plowed. Snow that has been placed onto the street could refreeze and cause a hazardous condition. Please do not push snow from your driveway onto the street, sidewalk, your neighbor's property, the cul-de-sac island, or any public right of way. If there is a fire hydrant in front of your home, please try to clear the snow around the hydrant to allow access in the event of a fire emergency.

Most important, in the event of an impending snowstorm, residents are asked to park their vehicles in the driveway and not block the sidewalk.

Q. Where do I call for questions about Snow and Ice Control operations?

A. Please contact the Public Works Department with questions at 847-853-7500, or email pubworks@wilmette.com. If a street has been missed or if there is a problem relating to the snow and ice control operations, please call Public Works at 847-853-7500 during regular business hours (7:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., Monday through Friday).

Q. Why do some trucks that are salting the main streets drive with the plows up?

A. Most snow plowing equipment has underbody plows in addition to the plows hanging on the front of the vehicle. The underbody plow may be in operation if the plow on the front of the vehicle is not down. In a continuous salting operation on the main streets, the plows may not be down to avoid plowing away the salt that has been previously placed on the street.

Q. What are the parking regulations during a snow storm or winter precipitation event?

A. After a snowfall of 2 inches or more, parking is prohibited on both sides of a street for a period of 24 hours after the snowfall stops or until the clearing operations are complete. Residents are asked to park vehicles in the driveway or garage while plowing operations are in progress. In the event of an impending snowstorm, residents are asked to park their vehicles in the driveway and not block the sidewalk.

For other winter precipitation events (snow of less than 2 inches, sleet, freezing rain or ice) parking is prohibited on one side of the street for streets that are no more than 27 feet wide. These streets are posted with winter precipitation signs. This is in effect for 24 hours after the event or until the salting operation is complete. The purpose of the parking ban during sleet or freezing rain is to allow trucks access to the streets to spread salt.

Q. What happens if it snows during the night? Do I need to move my car?

A. If the weather forecast calls for a winter storm event, residents are advised to park their vehicles in the driveway or garage. The Police Department patrols the streets in the early morning hours and will ticket vehicles that are preventing streets from being properly plowed and salted.

Q. If I receive a parking citation, what are my options?

A. There are two options. You may pay the fine or call 847-853-7548 to request a court date.

Q. How does the Village's sidewalk snow plowing operation work?

A. Wilmette is one of a handful of communities that plows snow from all public sidewalks. Priority is given to the main school and commuter walking routes, and business district sidewalks.

Snow will be plowed from non-priority sidewalks only after a 4" snowstorm, and only after all streets and priority sidewalks are plowed. Sidewalks located immediately next to the curb (carriage walks) are also plowed after 4" accumulation by the street plows. Sidewalk plowing can take as long as 48 or 72 hours to complete after a snowstorm ends.

The Village has specialized equipment to plow snow from the 165 miles of sidewalk. However, it does have its limitations and cannot plow all the snow from sidewalks. Additional challenges are created when residents park vehicles in driveways, blocking the sidewalk. This often leads to damaged parkway grass as snow plowing equipment must drive onto the parkway to avoid the parked vehicles.

Q. Is the Village responsible for damage to decorative landscaping?

A. The Village Code prohibits any obstructions such as rocks, boulders or shrubs in the parkway (the area between the sidewalk and street). This law was passed in an effort to prevent accidents and damage to Village snow plowing equipment. If such items are within the public way or encroaching into the public way and are damaged during snow plowing operations, the Village will not accept responsibility because these obstructions interfere with street or sidewalk plowing efforts.

Residents can place markers to indicate curves, offsets or other unusual sidewalk configurations. Markers alert plow drivers to these sidewalk anomalies.

