

SNOW REMOVAL

Morton County Highway Department Snow Removal Policy

POLICY STATEMENT: It is the policy of the Morton County Highway Department to remove snow from the County roads safely and quickly, and to provide reasonable ice control, while taking into consideration the availability of labor, equipment, and funding. This document includes general policies followed by the Morton County Highway Department and its operations pertaining to snow removal.

OPERATION HOURS: Normal working hours and office hours are Monday thru Thursday from 7:00 am to 5:30 pm. Work outside of these hours, such as early morning, evening, and weekends, will be at the discretion of Road Superintendent. Typically during and after a storm, snow removal and sanding operations will be conducted between the hours of 5:00 am and 5:00 pm. Exceptions for potential emergencies will be made as determined appropriate by the Superintendent. If you have a medical emergency, please contact the Sheriff's Department or 911.

OPERATIONS IN ADVERSE CONDITIONS: Equipment will not be dispatched when, in the judgment of the Road Superintendent, low visibility or other conditions are such that the risk to operators and other motorists outweighs the benefits. The general guideline is that equipment will not be dispatched when the estimated visibility in open areas is less than 500 feet. In the event of police, fire or medical emergency, vehicles may be dispatched at the direction of the Superintendent.

ROUTE PRIORITIES:

1. 1st Day – These are major county routes and usually will have snow removal operations occur within the first 24 hours of snowfall or blowing/drifted snow.
2. 2nd Day – These are minor county routes and usually will have snow removal operations occur within the first 48 hours of snowfall or blowing/drifted snow.
3. 3rd Day – These are township routes or local roads and usually will have snow removal operations occur with the first 72 hours of snowfall or blowing/drifted snow.
4. Suspended – These routes have been suspended for snow removal.

LEVELS OF SERVICE: Morton County does not have a bare pavement or bare road policy and roads may not be free of snow or ice. The following are general snow and ice removal policies:

1. Snow and ice removal may be limited to daylight hours, depending upon current weather conditions and the snow from the road will be removed as best as possible.
2. Snow removal typically will begin after two (2) inches of snow has accumulated on paved roads, and four (4) inches of snow has accumulated on gravel roads and wind conditions are within limits.
3. Sanding of the roads will be done at critical intersection, hills, curves and other

hazardous areas. Snow and ice removal equipment may not be operating when wind velocities exceed 25 miles per hour.

MAILBOXES: The County shall not repair mailboxes unless actual contact is made by a snow removal unit. Morton County will not repair mailboxes damaged by snow as it is being removed from the roadway. Repairs to mailboxes, hit by snow removal equipment, will be performed by Morton County Highway Department personnel. Existing mailboxes or posts will be reused if undamaged, however, if the existing mailbox or post is significantly damaged, a new mailbox or post will be installed. If a mailbox or post is replaced, the box will be a standard metal box and the post will be a standard breakaway post, meeting Federal Highway Standards. If a mailbox post cannot be replaced do to frozen ground, a temporary mailbox will be used until Spring.

OBSTRUCTIONS: Obstructions on the road right of way such as hay bales, vehicles, or fences which might cause drifting shall be removed by the owners.

1. Hay bales need to be removed from the road right of way before November 1st, and after that time the county may remove the bales or burn them.

2. The county shall not be liable for damage to stalled or stranded vehicles on the traveled portion of the roadway or other obstructions which will interfere with snow and ice removal and abrasive placement. The owners of stalled or stranded vehicles should immediately notify the Sheriff's Department. A stalled or stranded vehicle blocking the road needs to be moved as soon as possible, or the vehicle may be towed.

3. Vehicles shall also not be parked on the roadway surface or shoulder, and if a vehicle is parked on a personal driveway, it should be outside of the roadway clear zone, which is typically 15 to 20 feet from the edge of the roadway.

PRIVATE ROADS: The County will not perform private snow removal equipment on private roads until county roads are cleared. Normal county removal operations may result in snow or ice being deposited in driveways adjacent to public roads. The county will try to limit the amount of snow placed in private drives but when the snow on the roadway is heavy, the amount of snow left in a driveway may be heavy.

SNOW PLACED IN ROADWAY: County residents are to avoid adding to the hazards of wintertime driving by not placing snow from their driveway onto public roads and right of way. Snow dumped, plowed, pushed, or blown onto the roadway can create a serious hazard not only for motorists but also for snowplow equipment. NDCC 24-05-23 and 24-12-02 prohibits obstructing or causing to be obstructed any public highway or right of way. Piles of snow left on or near the road can freeze into a solid mass creating a hazardous situation for vehicles and snowplows. Accidents and damages caused by snow piles placed in the roadway may result in liability to the property owner. Piles of snow increase the chances of drifting snow onto the roadway. Property owners found in violation will be given notice and shall remove the snow. If the snow is not removed within a reasonable time, the county will remove the snow and the property owner will be billed.