



## THE CORPORATION OF THE VILLAGE OF SOUTH RIVER

### Policy#1-2014

### Being a Policy to define and explain The Village of South River Snow Clearing and Ice Control Policy

#### **PURPOSE OF THE POLICY**

To establish and outline priorities, best practices and procedures to ensure public safety for snow removal and ice control on streets, roadways and within the Village of South River.

#### **POLICY STATEMENT**

The goal of the Policy on Snow Clearing and Ice Control is to maintain the Village's streets, roadways and sidewalks in such a manner so as to:

1. Provide safe and accessible operating condition for motorists and pedestrians;
2. Reduce the hazards of icy road conditions;
3. Minimize economic losses to the Village resulting from unsatisfactory winter driving conditions;
4. Facilitate the handling of emergencies by Police, Fire and Ambulance services during the winter

#### **DEFINITIONS**

1. **"Snow Plowing"** – the grading of accumulated snow from street/sidewalk surfaces to the sides or middle of a street or to the side of a sidewalk. In general snow will be plowed to both sides of roadways except where it is more practical to clear the same side continually such as around parks, playgrounds, vacant lots, etc.
2. **"Snow Removal"** – the loading and hauling of snow from street surfaces to a snow disposal site.
3. **"Sanding"** – the application of a sand/salt or other mixture to a roadway surface for the purpose of improving traction, reduction of skidding and/or reduction of ice formation.
4. **"As Required"**- a statement which means the level of services is not set at a pre-determined number of activity occurrences per season or year.
5. **"Emergency Routes"** – the streets most commonly used by the fire department, the police and ambulance services.
6. **"cm."** – centimeter
7. **"Resident"** – owner, tenant, occupant, agent

## **GUIDELINES**

1. The Council of the Village of South River will annually establish an expenditure budget for sanding, snow plowing and snow removal operations.
2. The Village of South River will take full advantage of the snow storage capacity of road rights-of-way to minimize the expenditures associated with snow removal and hauling.
3. Although efforts will be made to minimize snow placed in driveways, it is the occupant's responsibility to clear access to their driveways.
4. Residents are referred to the private sector for the provision of snow plowing and snow removal services on private property, sidewalks and driveways.
5. Although this policy sets out the priorities and procedures for snow plowing/removal, the Public Works Chief Operator, or his designate, may direct the Village of South River staff and equipment to work in areas requiring immediate attention. This situation may be due to localized drifting or accumulations, or emergency conditions.
6. When scheduling work under this policy the Public Works Chief Operator, or designate, will endeavor to use the Village of South River's own equipment but may contract outside services as required. Contractors will be hired as required to supplement the Village truck, hauling snow during snow removal operations.
7. The work will be conducted on a seven day per week basis meaning that work may commence on weekends and holidays.
8. The Village of South River has a small public works department and as such cannot implement two or three full shifts in a twenty-four hour period. During the winter staff will be "on-call" and brought into service as required. During a snow event the Public Works Chief Operator, or designate, will check the weather and proceed to activate the call-in procedure if the snow accumulation has reached five (5) centimeters (or two inches).

## **RESPONSIBILITIES & AUTHORITY**

The Public Works Chief Operator will be responsible for, and have the authority of Council to ensure public safety, through the implementation of this policy. The Chief Operator may add streets/sidewalks to each classification as new streets/sidewalks are constructed.

The Public Works Chief Operator has the authority to determine the equipment which is being used, and will be under his/her direction in each situation where snow is being cleared or removed from public property, streets, boulevards and sidewalks in the Village of South River.

The Public Works Chief Operator has Council's authority to make the necessary decisions regarding how the snow removal process is completed in a safe and timely manner on all the Village's streets and sidewalks by the public works crew, private contractors and residents.

The Public Works Chief Operator has Council's authority to charge back to the occupant the cost to clean up snow removal which creates unsafe streets, sidewalks and sightlines by privately hired contractors for private property.

The Public Works Chief Operator has Council's authority to ensure employee safety, through radio communication and the possible use of other electronic devices, while performing the Village's assigned duties.

## **PRIORITIES AND PROCEDURES**

For the purpose of snow clearing, the street system has been classified in four categories (Primary I, Primary II, Primary III and Secondary). However, for a variety of reasons, some streets/sidewalks that are designated as a particular priority may be plowed on an accelerated basis together with streets in a higher priority. There may be extreme snowfall events which exceed the capacity of the available equipment and manpower to carry out the work within the time allotted, however, the order of priority will remain the same. The definitions listed below describe the general rule.

**Primary I-** Major intersections, school zone, excessive horizontal/vertical curvatures

**Primary II** - Emergency routes, primary streets, schools and areas of excessive horizontal/vertical curvature. This also includes Ottawa Avenue from Eagle Lake (the Fire Hall) east to the railroad tracks

**Primary III** - Village owned parking lots (including the Municipal Office/Library, Arena, Water Treatment Plant, Public Works Garage)

**Secondary I-** Residential Areas

**Secondary II-** The municipal road allowance in front of businesses

## **SECTION A: PLOWING OF STREETS AND SIDEWALKS**

### **STREETS**

1. The Village of South River will endeavor to undertake street sanding and snow plowing/removal operations, as required, in the following priority. When snow begins to accumulate, primary and secondary streets are cleared first to ensure that you, and emergency service vehicles like fire trucks and ambulances, can safely travel to hospitals, the school and places of work during or immediately after a snowfall. Residential streets will be plowed only after snow accumulates in excess of 5 centimeters (2 inches). When all streets require plowing, they are to be cleared within 24 hours after the end of the storm. Heavy snowfalls or successive storms can sometimes extend this period longer than 24 hours.
2. Response times may be extended due to severe weather conditions, equipment breakdowns, parked cars impeding road access or heavy traffic.
3. Following a major snowfall, snow removal operations concentrate on maintaining unobstructed sight lines at all major intersections. The downtown business area is a top priority.
4. Snow removal is not based on the height of snowbanks. If a snowbank is not obstructing traffic, it will not be removed.
5. The Village of South River is not responsible for snow removal at the end of private driveways.

6. The Village of South River is not responsible for lane markers, caution reflectors, identification signs or decorative fencing etc which has been placed near the street on municipally-owned road allowance.
7. Streets designated as Primary I, II or III shall be plowed on a continuous basis until completed. Plowing shall be undertaken during the night as much as possible in order to minimize the problems associated with traffic and parked vehicles.

<b>Classification</b>	<b>Criteria/Procedure</b>
<b>Primary I:</b> Major intersections, school zone, excessive horizontal/vertical curvatures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sand as soon as reasonably possible following notification of dangerous conditions</li> </ul>
<b>Primary II:</b> Emergency routes, primary streets, schools and areas of excessive horizontal/vertical curvature. This also includes Ottawa Avenue from Eagle Lake Road (the Fire Hall) east to the railroad tracks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Snow plowing and sanding will commence within 24 hours following the end of a snowfall of 5 cm or greater.</li> <li>- Snow removal, as required to maintain adequate and safe street width for vehicular traffic.</li> </ul>
<b>Primary III:</b> Village owned parking lots (including the Municipal Office/Library, Arena, Water Treatment Plant, Public Works Garage)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Snow plowing, sanding and removal will commence at the discretion of the Chief Public Works Operator</li> </ul>
<b>Secondary I:</b> Residential Areas and/or little used industrial streets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Snow removal, plowing and sanding will commence when there is severe rutting or drifting or the streets have become impassable due to accumulated snowfall(s).</li> </ul>
<b>Secondary II:</b> Municipal road allowances in front of businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Snow removal, plowing and sanding will commence following the completion of Primary and Secondary I classifications, or at the discretion of the Public Works Chief Operator.</li> </ul>
<b>Highway #124</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- This highway is under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Transportation (MTO) who is responsible for the snow removal and sanding contract.</li> </ul>

### **SIDEWALKS**

Most sidewalks are cleared only after snow accumulates in excess of five centimeters (2 inches), and only after roads are cleared. Sidewalks located on primary and secondary streets, which includes the school, are plowed first, followed by residential sidewalks. Sidewalk salting and

sanding is done only on primary and secondary sidewalks when extremely slippery conditions exist.

Sidewalks shall normally be maintained to a compacted snow surface.

To ensure the public's safety it is critical for the streets to have the snow cleared first. Clearing the sidewalks before the streets would result in traffic not being able to move as soon as possible following a storm and would mean windrows from the street plowing would fill in the sidewalks. For this reason the sidewalks are cleared after the roads. Sidewalks in the Business area are cleared first.

Some sidewalks do not meet the current sidewalk standard width and cannot be plowed with the Village's existing sidewalk plowing equipment due to their narrow width. Some sidewalks are located immediately alongside a building with a roofline which extends over the sidewalk. This creates a dangerous situation where snow and ice may fall on passing pedestrians. For safety reasons the section of sidewalk along the west side of Highway #124 between Marie Street and Ottawa Avenue is not cleared during the winter months.

### **SECTION B: USE OF SALT TREATED SAND ON VILLAGE STREETS**

The Village of South River does use road salt on occasion. Road salt is only effective when temperatures are in the approximate range of zero to minus 12 degrees Celsius.

The Village uses treated sand to provide a reasonable level of safety on our street system without significant impact to the environment.

Salt treated sand is used in the Village of South River to provide a reasonable level of safety on our streets. Salt is added to the sand (5% by weight) to enhance its performance as follows:

- i) It serves to keep sand fluid and workable when stockpiled throughout the cold winter months so that the stockpiles do not freeze and become unusable, and
- ii) The salt has the effect of keeping the sand fluid and workable enough that it can be handled in the conveying and spreading apparatus used in the trucks that apply the treated sand to the streets, and
- iii) The presence of the small quantity of salt in the mixture allows the material, under reasonable weather conditions, to stick to the icy surface of the street, thus reducing the tendency for the sand to be blown off the pavement surface by the wind and passing vehicles.

### **SECTION C: SNOW REMOVAL AND HAULING**

#### **REMOVAL OF WINDROWS**

Windrows of snow plowed across private approaches and/or walks and resulting from street plowing or sidewalk clearing shall not be removed by the Village of South River.

**REMOVAL OF HIGH PILES**

The Public Works Department shall monitor visibility at intersections on a regular basis throughout the winter months and any identified high piles at crosswalks, lane entrances and intersections shall be reduced so as to improve the line of sight for motorists and pedestrians. Priority shall normally be given to high piles located on streets designated as Primary. Priority shall be given to high piles located at intersections in the vicinity of the elementary school.

Every effort shall be made to relocate the snow within the adjacent boulevard storage areas, but loading and hauling may be necessary in many instances.

In years of significantly above-normal snow accumulations, it may be impractical to undertake the reduction of all high piles within the Village. On those occasions, efforts shall be concentrated on piles in areas of high traffic volumes.

High piles located adjacent to private approaches shall not be removed.

**REMOVAL OF BOULEVARD WINDROWS**

Windrows of snow shall normally be removed on streets designated as primary where the following criteria are met:

- i) Bridges
- ii) Where lack of adequate storage results in a reduction in the number of available traffic lanes thereby prohibiting the reasonable movement of vehicular traffic under normal winter driving conditions.
- iii) Where lack of adequate storage prohibits the reasonable movement of pedestrians using the adjacent sidewalk.
- iv) Traffic safety devices such as guardrails
- v) Fronting commercial business areas with on-street parking
- vi) Windrows present significant barriers to street/sidewalk access
- vii) Windrows of snow shall be removed, upon request, from boulevards in front of churches in order to facilitate weddings, funerals and other very special religious events.
- viii) Windrows of snow on boulevards adjacent to schools shall not be removed unless the lack of adequate storage has resulted in the adjacent sidewalk becoming obstructed so as to prevent the reasonable movement of pedestrian traffic.
- ix) Notwithstanding any of the above, the Village of South River shall take advantage of mechanical blowing of snow to adjacent properties to accommodate snow storage wherever possible, rather than resorting to hauling.

**Recommended by Public Works Committee Resolution # \_\_\_\_\_ dated \_\_\_\_\_**  
**Adopted by Council Resolution # \_\_\_\_\_ dated \_\_\_\_\_**

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **1. How does the village know when to activate its winter operations program?**

The Village of South River activates its winter operations program in response to weather conditions affecting roads, such as snowfall, wind-blown snow, sleet, freezing rain, frost and black ice.

Weather conditions are closely monitored by municipal staff around the clock, seven days a week, using a customized weather service, Ontario Ministry of Transportation highway reports and data generated from local remote weather stations.

Municipal staff regularly patrol municipal roads throughout the village to assess the need for plowing and sanding.

The Village contracts its snow plowing service to private contractors through the tender process prior to the winter season. Successful contractors must be prepared to remove snow beginning November 1<sup>st</sup> until April 15<sup>th</sup>. The contractor will begin plowing early in the morning after the snow accumulation reaches 5 centimeters (2 inches) or can be called in by the Public Works Chief Operator.

During freezing rain events municipal staff will begin the sanding process as soon as it is safe for them to travel safely to the municipal garage.

### **2. How many streets does the village plow?**

The Village of South River is responsible for the plowing of all the streets within its boundaries. A summary breakdown, using 2009 data, shows the Village's existing road system consists of 24.6 lane km of paved roads, 6.8 lane km of surface treated roads and 0.12 lane km of gravel roads. The Township of Machar plows the snow on Eagle Lake Road from the northern boundary to the intersection of Ottawa Avenue and Eagle Lake Road on our behalf. The Ministry of Transportation is responsible to contract the plowing and sanding of Highway #124.

A "lane kilometer" is a true measure of a road network that must be cleared or maintained. For example, snowplows clear only the right hand side of a road during each "pass" along a route. Therefore, a two km road is equal to four "lane" or "maintenance" km.

### **3. How many Public Works staff does the village employ?**

The Village of South River employs three full time public works staff who work 40 hours per week (not including overtime accumulated during the winter season) and one part-time employee who works 16 hours each week. The Village also contracts out the street plowing to a private contractor through the tender process every three years. The Village acts as back-up to the private contractor should the contractor be unable to fulfill the terms of his contract.

In addition to snow removal duties the public works department is also responsible for the water distribution system which includes the repair of water main breaks and water service freeze-ups. During years of extreme and prolonged cold water service freeze-ups are plentiful and require a coordination with other utilities before digging. Staff are also responsible for the Ministry of Natural Resources dam and must keep an eye on the water level and pull or add logs to the dam to keep it within the water level ban which have been set by MNR.

**4. Why is it taking so long for the Village to plow my street?**

The Village of South River municipal staff work very hard to ensure that the Village's streets are clear and passable within 24 hours, following the end of a winter storm.

The Village's heaviest travelled routes, primary streets, are plowed first following the end of a winter storm. Primary streets include Major intersections, school zone, excessive horizontal/vertical curvatures, emergency routes. This includes Ottawa Avenue from Eagle Lake (the Fire Hall) east to the railroad tracks. It also includes village owned parking lots (including the Municipal Office/Library, Arena, Water Treatment Plant, Public Works Garage).

Residential streets are plowed after the completion of the primary streets. Residents who live near the start of the route will have their streets plowed earlier than those who live near the end of the route.

Response times may be extended due to severe weather conditions, equipment breakdowns, parked cars impeding road access, heavy traffic, accidents or a combinations of any of the above.

**5. When does the village remove snow?**

Following a major snowfall, snow removal operations concentrate on maintaining unobstructed sight lines at all major intersections under the jurisdiction of the municipality. The Downtown Business area is top priority. Once this area has been cleared, municipal staff will move into residential neighbourhoods to clear intersections with an obstructed view and streets which have narrowed to one lane.

Snow removal is not based on the height of snowbanks. If a snowbank is not obstructing traffic, it will not be removed.

The Village of South River is not responsible for snow removal at the end of private driveways. Residents are referred to the private sector for the provision of snow plowing/removal services on private property, sidewalks and driveways.

**6. Why does the snow plow leave a windrow to block my driveway?**

Plow operators do not intentionally block driveways. It is not practical for plow operators to lift their blades at every driveway. The plow operator also has limited control over the amount and direction of snow that comes off the plow. When clearing your driveway, try

to pile the snow on the right side (standing in your driveway and looking towards the street). This can help reduce the amount of snow that is pushed onto your driveway when a snow plow passes. The Village does not clear driveways.

**7. Why does the plow always drop more snow on my side of the street?**

The first pass of a snowplow always picks up more snow than the second pass, often resulting in more snow on one side of the street than the other. Snowplow routes are designed to maximize the speed and efficiency of snow clearing operations. Many factors are taken into consideration when planning a route, including width of right-of-way on local streets, geographic features and destination points.

**8. Why does the plow always drop more snow on my corner lot?**

Unfortunately, corner lots usually have more snow on front and side yards than other properties, as they are located at the intersection of two roads which have a higher combined snow accumulation than one road.

**9. When does the Village clear the sidewalks?**

It is critical for the streets to have the snow cleared first. Clearing the sidewalks before the streets would result in traffic not being able to move as soon as possible following a storm and would mean windrows from the street plowing would fill in the sidewalks. For this reason the sidewalks are cleared after the roads. Sidewalks in the Business area are cleared first.

Some sidewalks do not meet the current sidewalk standard width and cannot be plowed with the Village's existing sidewalk plowing equipment due to their narrow width. Some sidewalks are located immediately alongside a building with a roofline which extends over the sidewalk. This creates a dangerous situation where snow and ice may fall on passing pedestrians. For safety reasons the section of sidewalk along the west side of Highway #124 between Marie Street and Ottawa Avenue is not cleared during the winter months.

**10. Why does the Village blow snow on my yard?**

Village staff work very hard not to blow snow onto the yards of residents however, with the sidewalk plowing equipment weather conditions and the safety of pedestrians and sidewalk plow operator often dictates the direction the snow is blown. During a storm or when wind is blowing snow from snowbanks or from open spaces combined with the blown snow generated by the sidewalk plow visibility can be reduced to poor or zero. The chute of the blower is then turned in the same direction as the blowing wind in order to allow the operator to see if there are pedestrians ahead on the sidewalk or a large item which is blocking the sidewalk (such as a vehicle). Not turning the blower could result in injury to either a pedestrian or the sidewalk snow plow operator.

In years of excessive snow accumulation when snow falls on successive days the Village will take full advantage of the snow storage capacity of street right-of-way to minimize the expenditures associated with snow removal and hauling.

Notwithstanding any of the above, the Village of South River shall take advantage of mechanical blowing of snow to adjacent properties to accommodate snow storage wherever possible, rather than resorting to hauling.

**11. Why does the Village plow when it is not snowing?**

Between winter storms, the plow is assigned to push back snow that has accumulated on the road shoulder, as well as snowbanks where necessary. This assignment widens local streets in preparation for additional snow accumulations.

During milder temperatures the snow plow may also be assigned to remove some of the snow build-up from the streets evening out the driving surface.

**12. Should I worry if the hydrant near my home has not been dug out?**

No. Each hydrant is marked with a yellow marker for easy recognition as well as mapped on the Global Information System (GIS) system for easy identification and location. The Public Works' Department clear the hydrants several times each winter which prevents snow packed build-up from the passing plow. Any fire related event would mean a tanker would begin the process of fire suppression while hoses are being hooked to the hydrants. The safety of the residents and property in this community is always a top priority.

**13. What should I do if my mailbox has been damaged?**

If your mailbox has been damaged and you believe the damage is the result of plowing operations, please contact the Village of South River Municipal Office at 705-386-2573. You will be asked to submit a claim for property damage.

The Village of South River will not be responsible for other items placed at the end of driveways on municipally-owned road allowance. Items such as, but not limited to, driveway markers, reflectors, decorative pillars, fencing, decorative signage, etc. should be removed from the end of the property at the start of the winter snow removal season to allow snow removal and snow clearing operations to take place smoothly and efficiently.

**14. What is the Village doing to minimize the environmental impact of road salt?**

The Village of South River does use road salt on occasion. Road salt is only effective when temperatures are in the approximate range of zero to minus 12 degrees Celsius.

The Village uses treated sand to provide a reasonable level of safety on our street system without significant impact to the environment. See Section B of the Snow Removal Policy.

**15. Am I allowed to plow snow from my property onto the opposite side of the street?**

It is not permitted to push snow onto banks or properties on the opposite side of the road. Accumulated snow from private plowing can interfere with sightlines and results in buildup of icy sections on the road. Throwing snow directly onto public sidewalks and roads is strictly prohibited. Citizens found in contravention can be charged under the Ontario Highway Traffic Act.

It is also prohibited to push snow from private property and place it beside snowbanks which are the result of the snowplow removing snow from the street. This practice means the plow

will It can also interfere with sightlines and results in buildup of icy sections on the road or is collected in the blade of the snow plow and deposited further down the street creating additional accumulation for private residents to remove from the end of the driveways.

**16. How can I help?**

- Pile snow on the right side of your driveway (when facing the road) when shoveling. This helps minimize the ridge of snow created by the snowplow at the end of your driveway.
- Remove plowed snow at the end of your driveway (see above bullet). Snowplow operators must push snow to the curb or shoulder, possibly covering recently shoveled driveways.
- Remove snow from fire hydrants and drainage catch basins near your property
- Park vehicles off the street. By-law # \_\_\_\_\_ prohibits parking of vehicles on village streets between \_\_\_\_\_ from November 1 to \_\_\_\_\_.
- Be patient. We live in a part of Ontario that normally receives a great deal of snow. If you have a complaint regarding snow removal kindly come into the office and fill out a Complaint Form. The complaint will be reviewed at the next Public Works Committee meeting and necessary action, if any, will be taken.