

City of Urbana Snow Removal- FAQ's

When does snow removal begin?

Many times snow removal activities begin before snow starts to fall. The types of activities are dependent on the weather conditions for each snow event.

Temperatures before, during and after, the amount of snow, the moisture content of the snow, and wind speed and direction are all taken into consideration.

As a guideline, City crews will treat the pavement with salt to remove any snow when accumulations are expected to be two inches or less. When snow accumulation begins to exceed two inches the crews will begin plowing operations.

What about the Downtown and South Philo Road Business Districts?

The Downtown and South Philo Road Business District routes receive special attention. After primary and secondary roads are cleared, part of the snow crew then concentrates on the streets and parking lots in these areas.

When will my street be plowed?

Depending on the severity of the storm, all residential streets are generally plowed within 24 hours after the storm ends. The City is divided into 16 residential zones that are cleared on a systematic rotational basis. For example, the two residential zones that are at the top (first on the list) will be at the bottom (last on the list) the following year. The order for the 2022-2023 winter season is as follows:

5, 6, 1, 11, 9, 8, 13, 15, 16, 3, 4, 14 ,7, 10, 2, 12

When will my dead-end street or cul-de-sac be plowed?

Dead-end streets and cul-de-sacs will be cleared when equipment becomes available or after all residential routes are complete. Smaller dump-bed trucks will be used primarily, with other equipment such as front-end loaders and backhoes helping when time permits. When clearing these types of streets our crew members make every attempt to push the snow into the median and areas where residents should not be affected.

When do alleys get plowed?

All public residential alleys that require access are plowed only after 5 inches of snow has accumulated.

Should we remove cars from the residential streets during snow removal?

A snow plow needs a minimum roadway width of 12 feet to maneuver safely, and on many streets snow plows cannot operate when cars are parked on both sides of the street. To help the snow crews clean the streets quickly, and without your vehicle being plowed in with snow, please park your vehicle in an area off of the street. A good rule of thumb to follow would be to move your vehicle when snow is forecasted.

Why do the plow trucks come through my neighborhood so often?

Many times our first priority is to plow 1 pass through each street to allow emergency vehicle access for all residents. Efforts then turn to pushing snow to the curbside so that the melting snow can drain down the gutter. To accomplish this could take many trips down each side of the street.

What about our driveways?

Removing snow from driveways is the responsibility of the resident. During snowstorms it is not possible to plow the street without plowing snow against parked cars, adjacent sidewalks, or into driveway approaches. When persons are plowed into a space or if a driveway has snow plowed into it, citizens are responsible for removing any snow.

To minimize the frustrating problem of the snow plow covering your driveway with snow after you've just shoveled it, look at your house from the street, shovel to the side of the drive and clear the snow on the right side for 15 feet at the curb line. That way the plow will deposit the snow before the driveway.

What about sidewalks?

It is the policy of the Urbana Public Works Department to remove all snow and ice from sidewalks adjacent to City owned buildings and property. All sidewalks adjacent to private property are the responsibility of the homeowner.

The Urbana City Council passed an ordinance on December 5, 2011 which requires property owners within identified snow removal districts to clear the adjacent public sidewalk of snow and ice. Sidewalk clearance must occur within 24 hours of a declaration made by the Public Works Director. After a winter storm, notice that the sidewalk clearance requirements are in effect will be issued through local media outlets and on the City's website.

For more information on the ordinance and maps, please visit <http://urbanaininois.us/businesses/sidewalk-snow-removal> or call the Environmental Compliance Officer at (217) 384-2416.

What if my mailbox becomes covered with snow?

Sometimes when the accumulation of snow is substantial curbside mailboxes may become blocked and/or damaged by snow. The City does not have the resources to remove snow after the storm to assist the Post Office in delivering your mail. The

Federal Postmaster has determined that the responsibility for removing snow to allow for mail delivery lies with the resident at that address. For further information please contact the Urbana Postmaster at (217) 367-4658.

What if my mailbox is damaged by the City's plowing operations during a storm?

If you believe your curbside mailbox was damaged by a City snow plow, call the Department of Public Works at (217) 384-2342. If it has been confirmed by the Public Works Operations Supervisor that a mailbox on the City right of way was damaged by a City snow plow, the City will reimburse the property owner up to a maximum of \$75 for repair or replacement. The property owner will need to submit a receipt to the City's Finance Department confirming the purchase of a mailbox and/or material to repair the damage.

Please note that the placement of mailboxes must conform to standards set forth by the United States Postal System.

- Mailbox height is 41 inches to 45 inches measured from the bottom of the mailbox to street level.
- The front of the mailbox may not extend beyond the back of the curb or overhang the curb or street. A 6 to 8 inch setback measured from the back of the curb to the front of the mailbox is required. However, the front of the mailbox should not be greater than eight inches from the back of the curb in order to remain accessible for your postal carrier.

My landlord is not clearing the area around the building; what can I do?

This is subject to any agreements made between the landlord and the tenant. To find out more about your rights as a tenant, contact the Tenant Union, Champaign-Urbana at (217) 352-6220.

If I have an emergency, what should I do?

Call METCAD at 911.

What if I have more questions about snow removal?

Please call Urbana Public Works at (217) 384-2342 or send an email to vhgustafson@urbanaininois.us.