

Winter Maintenance

Frequently Asked Questions

Snow Safety Tips & Etiquette

- Be a good neighbor, please lend a helping hand to those who may not be physically able to shovel.
- To help keep your children safe, please don't let them play in the snow piles or on the snow banks at the side of the road.
- When you are clearing snow, please pile it on your property and do not throw it back onto the sidewalk or street.
- Please place your garbage bins, and blue bins on a cleared area not on the roadway or sidewalk – do not place them on the top of snow piles. For more information, contact [Bluewater Recycling Association](#).
- You can help prevent street flooding and icing by clearing snow away from storm sewer catch basins. When the weather turns warmer and snow begins to melt, it is important that the runoff water gets into the storm sewer. If the catch basin is fully or even partially obstructed by a build-up of snow and ice, street flooding can occur. Should the temperature drop again after the flooding, the street can become icy.
- Residents are asked to please remove snow from around all municipal fire hydrants in a timely manner without damaging the hydrant. Hydrants are also to be cleared of any shrubs or hedges. It is imperative that all fire hydrants are easily accessible to the Fire Department.
- If you need help or require assistance clearing your driveway we suggest you consider contacting [Snow Angels](#). Or if you are able to help or lend a hand registering with [Snow Angels](#) is a great way to help others in our community.

Things you can do to help

1. When you shovel your driveway, place the snow on the "downstream" (right side) of your driveway, this will help reduce the size of the windrow left on your driveway the next time the plow comes by.
2. Observe and comply with [Property Standards](#) and [Right of Way By-laws](#).

3. Don't park overnight on any municipal street or road. The municipal parking by-law does not allow parking on municipal roads between Labour Day and Victoria Day, from 2 am to 7 am.
4. Don't push snow from a driveway or parking lot onto a municipal street or sidewalk.
5. Don't park your vehicle at the end of your driveway in a way that would impede municipal plows.
6. Try to keep the catch basin adjacent to your property free from ice and snow to help prevent localized flooding.
7. Don't place garbage bins or recycling bins where they can be buried, damaged or interfere with snow removal.
8. Avoid installing mailboxes where they can be damaged by plowing operations. [Canada Post](#) can provide guidelines concerning the proper distances mailboxes should be placed from road surfaces.

FAQ's

Why does the snow plow leave such a pile of snow across my driveway after I've just shoveled it out?

The plows are designed to remove snow from the road and deposit it on the boulevard. Driveways form part of the boulevard. The municipality does not have the resources to remove the snow from driveways. We appreciate that this can be frustrating, however, we ask for your cooperation in clearing the snow without placing it on the roadway, as this is dangerous and in contravention of the [Highway Traffic Act](#) and the municipality's [Right of Way By-law](#). When you shovel your driveway, place the snow "downstream" (right side) to reduce the likelihood your driveway will be filled in the next time the plow comes by.

When will my street be plowed?

Where your street lies in relation to where the plow starts and the road classification, determines the time it takes a plow to get there. The municipality's Winter Maintenance Plan aims to provide safe roads and sidewalks during the winter season at an affordable cost.

The municipality has a 24/7 response team equipped with: 14 pieces of combination road plowing and de-icing equipment, five road plowing graders, two front-end loaders,

three rubber tired backhoes, and 2 sidewalk machines. The response team maintains the municipality's 583 kms of roadway, and 30 kms of sidewalks. The municipality also tracks weather conditions and deploys road temperature sensors outfitted to its fleet which monitors our roads for snow and ice detection.

We have an established plan and routes for clearing snow, and ask that you refrain from calling during the first day of a snow event.

- After the snowfall ends, it can take 8-12 hours to clear priority roads, and for all municipal roads approximately 24 hours.
- A larger or continuous snowfall event may extend the time necessary to clear snow from local streets and cul-de-sacs.

The municipality follows the provincially prescribed standards for winter maintenance ([Minimum Maintenance Standards for Municipal Highways, O. Reg. 239/02](#)). Roads are categorized into five main classes. Class 1, 2 and 3 or priority roads, which include arterial and some secondary collectors, take first priority. Classes 4 and 5, which include local urban streets, rural side roads and cul-de-sacs, have less priority. Priority roads carry the higher volumes of traffic and are most easily identified as main (arterial) roads or secondary collector roads. These are the roads people use to get to business areas and in and out of the municipality. The 'other' roads are primarily residential or secondary routes and these are systematically plowed after the 'priority' routes are completed.

When can I expect my sidewalk to be cleared?

Sidewalks are cleared after snow accumulates in excess of five centimetres (two inches). Sidewalk clearing is generally completed within 24 - 48 hours after the end of the storm; however, when we have a heavy snowfall, or successive winter events back-to-back, it will take longer to clear all sidewalks. Sidewalks are cleared to a snow packed condition, as the snow equipment does not allow for clearing down to bare pavement.

I've shovelled my driveway, and a day or two later the plow truck has filled it back in – why?

In a major snowstorm the trucks do not initially perform a full road width plowing. This is the most efficient and effective way to get the municipality moving. Crews return a day or two later to perform "clean-up operations". This completely opens the street for maximum efficiency, moves remaining snow onto boulevards, clears catch basins for potential water runoff, allows on street parking, and creates storage space for the next storm.

Is salt dangerous to the environment?

Environment Canada does not ban the use of road salt as it is not harmful to humans but has declared it as CEPA* Toxic (i.e., toxic to the environment). Road authorities take action by improving their own management of road salt by metering salt distribution and pre-wetting to reduce the environmental effects.

We report our salt usage on an annual basis and continually review our winter control operations and evaluate new technologies and processes, to reduce the amount of road salt required in managing snow and ice. Annual usage of road salt varies year to year depending on the weather conditions encountered throughout the winter maintenance season.

*Canadian Environmental Protection Act.

I live on a corner lot. Why do I end up with an excessive amount of snow at the bottom of my driveway?

Residents living on corner lots or the first on the right of an intersection usually get more snow deposited in their driveways. When the snowplow turns right it sweeps a much larger area of the road than when it is traveling in a straight line, as well, the snow also does not discharge from the plow truck. Turning right effectively makes the plow push most of the snow ahead instead of moving it from the centre of the road to the side. The first property and driveway encountered after the plow straightens out usually gets more snow than others in the immediate area. We appreciate that this can be frustrating and we appreciate your cooperation.

I live on a court. When will the pile of snow in the centre of the court be removed?

The snow piles in the centre of courts are removed by front-end loaders. This will be done when staff and equipment resources permit after the snow removal as part of the "clean-up operations".

Why doesn't the plow do a better job clearing the centre of a cul-de-sac?

It is very difficult for our larger plow units to maneuver in the centre of a cul-de-sac to clear all the snow. We will use smaller plows or front-end loaders, depending on availability, if a significant amount of snow accumulates.

What if a municipal plow damages my...

- **Sod:** damage is the result of two factors: The plow operator may have difficulty finding the sidewalk or the edge of the road under a blanket of snow, or if the ground is not frozen. Once a path is cleared, subsequent trips by the sidewalk

plow are made easier. If the sod was damaged during the first pass of the season then the damage may not be discovered until the snow melts. The cost to repair sod damage is relatively minor because we have found that homeowners will repair the damage in front of their property before the municipality crews arrive. This is a tremendous help because municipal staff typically don't repair sod damage until the winter season is typically over.

To report sod damage for repair in the spring please contact the municipality at 519-666-0190 or publicworks@middlesexcentre.ca.

- **Driveway or Curbs:** The municipality owns the boulevard area and will use asphalt to repair any damage caused by municipal plows. The municipality will not restore driveway boulevards that are damaged during winter control operations, finished with interlocking brick, patterned concrete or concrete/wood curbs.

To report damage to driveway or curbs, please contact the municipality at 519-666-0190 or publicworks@middlesexcentre.ca. An inspection, assessment and recommendation will be made by the road supervisor.

- **Mailbox:** The municipality will repair or replace a damaged or destroyed mailbox if the damage is deemed to result from a direct hit by plow equipment. Mailboxes damaged by snow load off the plow equipment will not be eligible for repair or replacement by the municipality. The responsibility for maintaining mailboxes lies with the owner of the mailbox. Mailbox owners are required to repair their own mailboxes that have been damaged by snow impact. Please re-attach the mailbox securely to prevent this from happening again.

To report a damaged mailbox, please contact the municipality at 519-666-0190 or publicworks@middlesexcentre.ca. An inspection, assessment and recommendation will be made by the road supervisor.

Mailboxes replaced by the municipality will be a basic mailbox, not necessarily the same as the original mailbox. Damaged posts will be replaced by temporary posts with permanent repairs undertaken in the spring once the frost is out of the ground.

- **Sprinklers:** Sprinklers located within the municipal boulevard and Right of Way that are damaged as a result of plowing activities are the responsibility of the respective property owner for any repairs that maybe required.

In the event sprinklers are damaged that are located on private property please contact the municipality at 519-666-0190 or publicworks@middlesexcentre.ca for a review by municipal staff and to schedule repairs (if required).

Why was my street missed?

Severe weather conditions, mandatory working regulations, too many vehicles parked on the street, and other factors may delay our ability to clear all municipal roads and sidewalks of snow and ice. Even when all of our equipment is at work, heavy or drifting snow may re-cover streets and sidewalks before repeat clearing is possible. We ask that you give us time to manage large snow events.

New Subdivisions

Some newly built roads in un-assumed subdivisions may not receive winter control services by the municipality. These un-assumed roads and sidewalks are the responsibility of the developer/builder to maintain. The municipality offers winter maintenance activities to developers/builders for a set fee, however they are not required to use the municipal service.

Who is responsible for clearing snow around Canada Post Community Mailboxes?

Canada Post is responsible for clearing the snow and ice around the community mailboxes. Contact Canada Post at 1-800-267-1177 for more information.

What are my responsibilities?

Property owners are responsible for clearing snow and ice from their walkways, driveways, ramps, loading docks, parking areas, as well as outdoor stairs and landings in accordance with the [Property Standards By-law](#) and the [Right Of Way By-law](#). Family members, visitors and other service personnel will thank you for providing a safe path to your door.

Municipality of Middlesex Centre

Public Works and Engineering

Tel: 519-666-0190 or 1-800-220-8968

Email: publicworks@middlesexcentre.ca