

Town of Reading Highway Department
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Town Board

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Superintendent of Highways

2023-2024 Winter Safety Gram

Public Service Numbers

Town Government.

Town Hall: (607) 535-7459

Highway Department (607) 535-7459 Ext 106

EMERGENCIES – DIAL 911

Our Mission Statement: The Town of Reading Highway Department is dedicated to providing safe, courteous, dependable and economical service, wherever and whenever possible for all our residents.

Acknowledgement

The Highway Department's efforts and success would not be possible without the support of the Town of Reading Town Board. Again, this year the Supervisor and Councilpersons have provided the funds necessary to purchase and maintain the equipment and materials necessary to get the job done. They should be congratulated for their foresight and their interest in public safety.

You, the Town of Reading taxpayer and resident, are a very important part to a successful snow and ice control campaign. Your understanding and cooperation are an integral part of our plan. To help inform you regarding our methods and give you a few helpful hints, we have compiled the following text.

Again, I would like to stress this is a **team** effort and I would like to give thanks all of **our** Highway Department employees, the Town Board, Schuyler County Highway Department the Schuyler County Sheriff's Department, the Volunteer Fire departments and Ambulance Corps, the Watkins Glen and Dundee School Districts, our neighboring highway departments and all of the residents of the community for working together to provide a safe and healthy environment in the Town of Reading.

Jason Switzer
Town of Reading Highway Superintendent

Dear Town of Reading Resident:

It is the Town of Reading's policy to provide winter road maintenance service through its Highway Department. The goal of this policy is to provide for safe and efficient transportation within the constraints of the Town's budgetary resources to the traveling public on all roads maintained by the Town of Reading.

The Town of Reading by its nature is similar to many other towns in Central New York having tremendous elevation changes in a few miles. This unique geographic characteristic can at times create difficulties when dispatching maintenance vehicles. In an effort to provide a safe driving experience the following reasonable written plan of service shall be administered.

Before the Snow Falls

Beginning as early as September, the Town of Reading Highway Department begins preparing for the winter months ahead by reviewing snow removal routes, interfacing with school districts personnel in regards to bus routes and turn-a-rounds, and servicing maintenance equipment. Preparation and servicing of equipment for the upcoming winter continues through November. November is an extremely critical time, as the equipment used for snow removal operations is used for other things and our focus can change at very short notice.

The Highway Department's salt storage facility is stockpiled with 300 tons of de-icing salt and 2500 tons of a 75%-25% sand/cinder mixture is blended as a traction agent. In order to be properly prepared for inclement weather during the snow season, the Highway Department continually monitors daily weather conditions via satellite and receives daily weather reports from local weather sources and the National Weather Service.

When the Snowfall Starts

The Town of Reading is split into 3 distinct plowing routes, north, south, and streets adjacent to Watkins Glen. These plowing routes are designed to avoid overlap of service and to accomplish a complete maintenance cycle in 3.5 hours.

Call out after a storm event shall begin @ 4:00 am, a start time of 4:00 am should allow all bus routes to be treated by 6:30 am and all roads to be treated by 7:30 am. For storm events that after or during the a.m. commute maintenance runs will begin at approximately 12:00 noon to allow for school bus routes to be treated before the normal dismissal time. Should precipitation continue; runs will continue until evening commute ends. Under most circumstances all maintenance will end by 7:00 pm. Severe weather conditions (i.e. freezing rain/roadway icing) may dictate that maintenance might continue after the 7:00 p.m. end or before the 3:00 a.m. start time frame for the safety of the highway department personnel.

It should be understood that unusual situations (i.e. man power shortages, extreme weather events and mechanical malfunctions) might change these time schedules. Every effort to accomplish these maintenance schedules shall be attempted.

An important step in dealing with snowfall is road and street salting. Top priority is given to the Town's main roads. Those roads are routes that the Town has found to be the heaviest year-round traffic and usually are major arteries running north/south or east/west that have double yellow centerlines. School bus routes are also given top priority.

The snow removal process starts when frozen precipitation begins falling. Operations initiate with the application of salt or a sand/salt blend to the roads and continue until the roads or streets are clear or material application is no longer effective due to the depth of the snow.

When the Snowfall Continues

When two or three inches of snow have accumulated and more is expected, snow is more economically removed by plowing rather than salting. Town highway department personnel will plow all roads that the Town of Reading is responsible for performing winter maintenance on. Our first responsibility is to open the main roads. These arterials are the key to providing safe access for emergency vehicles as well as maintaining the steady flow of traffic since most residents live within a short distance of such a route. The plows then continue to plow all roads on the route to "open up" each one in sequence. If the storm continues in intensity, the trucks remain in that same pattern until the storm abates. At that time, the trucks begin to "widen out" all roads by pushing the accumulated snow back to behind the ditch line and clearing intersections.

Remember, trained crews work during these storms to keep the roads open and passable. If you wish to report a hazardous condition, call the Highway Department at 535-7459 Ext 106. If there is a medical emergency, call 911 or contact the Schuyler County Sheriffs Department at 535-8222.

After the Storm is Over

Crews continue to monitor all roads for icy spots and areas where winds redeposit the snow in traffic lanes. Usually an application of salt and/or sand is applied to all roads and streets so the riding surface remains drivable. If the accumulation is particularly heavy, the Town may use larger equipment (i.e. wheel loaders) to clear intersections or areas that have received wind driven drifts. Crews are also dispatched to clear upstream culvert mouths and catch basins so that melting snow can run off.

You may wish to avoid a potential problem, and also be of assistance to your neighbors by cleaning off a catch basin, culvert entrance or shoveling out a nearby fire hydrant. Please avoid creating a hazard by discarding snow from your driveway or sidewalk into the roadway.

Parking and Travel Regulations

There is no “on road parking” in the Town of Reading from November 15th through April 15th of each year, this includes areas adjacent to the road surface (i.e. road shoulders and driveway entrances within the right-of-way). Vehicles parked illegally or abandoned on roads are subject to towing at the owner’s expense as well as being ticketed by the Schuylter County Sheriff’s Department. As soon as you are aware that bad weather is on the way, make sure your vehicle is off the street. This protects your car from being splashed with slush, becoming plowed in, or being hit by the snowplow or bypassing vehicles. Best of all, the snowplow has space to move the snow to.

Mailboxes and Newspaper boxes

Mail and newspaper boxes placed in the highway right-of-way are allowed there merely as a convenience to the homeowner and the delivery persons. While the highway department makes every effort to avoid damaging these structures, it may at times, depending on visibility be unavoidable. Therefore the Town of Reading takes **no responsibility for damaged mailboxes or newspaper boxes**. Most mailbox damage is a direct result of snow being cast off of the wing, not direct wing/plow contact. In certain situations, at the Highway Superintendent’s discretion, a mailbox that has been physically struck by a Town of Reading vehicle may be repaired or replaced by the department.

HELPING US HELP YOU

Be prepared, Be Aware and Be Patient

Before it snows, remember last year’s problems and try to tackle them in advance. If you do your own snow removal, have your tools and supplies handy. Shovels, snow blowers, calcium chloride, rock salt and sand should be ready before the season begins. If you hire someone to do your snow removal, make those arrangements early. It can be difficult to find someone in the middle of a storm.

Make arrangements to have adequate food supplies on hand. Keep flashlights, a battery powered radio and emergency equipment on hand in case of disruption in the power supply.

Area news media will announce approaching storms and will disseminate information on school closings and meeting cancellations. WFLR Radio @ 101.9 FM and 1570 AM in Dundee, N.Y. is the radio station used by the Town of Reading for notification on highway emergencies. They will also announce road closing or re-routings.

Please do not go out during or immediately after a snowstorm unless it is truly necessary. Crews have many hours of hard work to complete their snow clearing operations. Less traffic on the road means that we will be able to clear the roads more quickly and completely. Under the best of conditions, it will take us at least 4 hours from the time it stops snowing completely to complete our snow removal operations.

Remember, whether it is your driveway for which you are responsible or the 45 miles of roads for which we are responsible, snow removal is an arduous and time-consuming task. Please understand that the Highway Department cannot shovel ridges or windows from your driveway entrance, nor can we plow private property.

Tips & Suggestions

When shoveling out the mouth of your driveway, throw it to the right of your driveway as your face the street or “downstream”. Throwing or plowing snow in the road is not only illegal it can create a

patch of snow and ice that freezes over and causes a hazardous condition. Besides, it will only be re-deposited when the plow comes around again.

If at all possible, finish clearing your driveway entrance after the final widening pass has been completed. *Helpful Hint: Leave a strip of snow at the edge of your driveway; this will block some of the snow from entering your driveway when the plow widens the roadway.* The final widening pass is usually completed approximately 8 to 10 hours after the snow stops completely. This, of course, depends on the severity of the storm.

Plan alternate ways and extra time to travel to main routes and to your place of employment. Remember! Slow down, brake slowly and allow plenty of room between you and the vehicle ahead of you.

During times of reduced visibility, watch for pedestrians, snow removal equipment, and disabled vehicles. Maintain your vehicle properly. Take time to thoroughly clean and defrost your vehicle's windows before "hitting" the highway. Equip your car with snow tires or chains and keep your headlights and taillights clean and on at all times.

Questions & Answers

1. *Why does the Highway Department provide snow and ice control?*
To keep roadways open and safe for emergency response by the Police, Fire and Ambulance services and to provide access to home, work, school and mobility to all Town of Reading residents as well as the traveling public.
2. *Why does the Highway Department have to plow from ditch to ditch?*
To keep the streets clean of snow and ice, and allow melting snow to reach culverts and catch basins.
3. *I cannot shovel my driveway because I am elderly or disabled, what should I do?*
Make arrangements with a family member, a friend, a neighbor or hire a contractor to do this for you.
4. *My car was towed, where is it?*
Call the Schuyler County Sheriff's Department at (607) 535-8222.
5. *Who can I call if I have a question regarding the Town's snow removal service?*
Call the Town of Reading Highway Department (607) 535-7459 Ext 106
6. *I'd like to make a suggestion on snow removal: Where should I send it?*
Send suggestions by mail to: Town of Reading Highway Department
P.O. Box 28
Reading Center, N.Y. 14876

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E-mail – readinghwy@htva.net.