

SNOW IN THE CITY – FAQ’S

The city of McCall plows more than 50 miles of snow covered streets after each snow event.

The average winter storm of four to eight inches of snow requires a minimum of 12 hours of plowing after the snow has stopped falling to clear a path on all streets. Keeping our community safe is a community effort, please do all you can to help the City do its job.

When is it okay to park on my street again after it’s been plowed?

During plowing season parking on downtown streets is prohibited between 3 a.m. and 7 a.m. during the winter, and on other city streets between 3 a.m. and noon. This ensures the safety of the crew, maximizes our efficiency and protects your vehicle from damage. *Ord. 920, 2-13-2014*

Whom may I call if I have a suggestion, complaint, or request?

For normal snow plowing operations call 634-5580. For medical, fire or police emergencies, call 911.

Why did the snow plow leave a berm in front of my driveway, and why is it my responsibility to get rid of it?

The berm left behind as the snowplow cannot always be avoided. Many of our plows do not have snow gates and those that do find wet heavy snow makes the gate impossible to use. The City does not have the resources to eliminate berms and therefore it becomes the property owners’ responsibility to create access to their driveway. *Keep in mind waiting to plow your driveway after the streets crew has plowed your street may minimize your berm.*

What if they missed plowing my street?

The City’s Snow Removal Policy requires that main arterial roadways and major collectors be plowed first, and then be kept open, so operators may not begin plowing residential streets for several hours after the snow has stopped falling, or sometimes until storms end. If all other streets in your area have been plowed and yours hasn’t, please call 634-5580.

It seems like we’re always plowed last. Why can’t we be first sometimes?

That’s a good question. Our crews plow on a schedule starting with the heavily traveled roads and bus routes followed by secondary roads in a predetermined pattern.

I am elderly or disabled and can’t shovel snow. What can I do?

If possible, reach out to a neighbor to help clear the sidewalks, or call local service groups, churches or hire a licensed contractor.

Can the City’s snowplow operator plow my driveway or berm if I am elderly, disabled, or not physically able to shovel?

Unfortunately, the Public Works Streets Department does not have the resources to plow driveways and/or berms of those who are unable to do so. Our primary goal is to use the resources we have to provide safe and reliable roadways in the most efficient manner possible. We encourage those who are not able to shovel to ask neighbors for assistance or hire a private licensed snowplow service.

I live in the City. Why does it take so long for my road to be plowed?

The City’s snowplow program is prioritized on a “greatest impact” basis. The main roads (arterials) are plowed first, followed by collector and residential streets. This allows citizens some mobility within the community and keeps emergency services as open as possible. With quick and heavy snowfall, it may be necessary for the snowplow to remain on the arterial and collector roads for longer periods to keep up with the snow, which can cause a significant delay in getting to the residential streets. Also, your road may be plowed in the middle of the night and, when you wake up in the morning, more snow may have accumulated.

How far off the road do I need to park my car in my driveway?

You are advised to park as far away from the street and right of way as possible to avoid damage. Keep in mind that in many areas there is an additional space called a snow utility easement utilized by the City for snow removal.

When do the snowplows get deployed and how long are they out?

In most cases the crew will plow snow when the depth is around three inches and is accumulating. This depth makes plowing most effective and is the industry standard. You can see what the streets crew sees by logging on to the website and viewing our snow cam.

What if I have an emergency and can't get out of my house?

In the event of an emergency, call 911. If the Police Department determines you have a qualifying emergency, a plow will be dispatched to help emergency crews get access.

Should my snow removal company have a license with the City?

Yes, if the company removes snow for pay within the city limits they need have a business license with a snow removal add on. City will be launching a decal program to recognize these vendors.

How can citizens help during the snow season?

- Prepare for the snow season – get the necessary equipment, including snow shovels, snow blower, and tire chains.
- Watch weather forecasts; The National Weather Service reliably predicts winter storm activity. Be sure to obtain prescription medications, groceries and other necessities prior to the arrival of the storm whenever possible.
- Know what kind of road you live on – City, County, private or public road; and whether your road is an arterial, collector, main residential, cul-de-sac, or residential side street.
- Be familiar with your property lines. Knowing where your boundaries begin and end will help eliminate confusion on where City right of ways are located. City right of ways are paths on a person's land which other people have a legal right to use or belong to another.
- If you live on a private street, get together with neighbors and have a plan for plowing.
- Know what is too much. If a big storm is coming and you have a job that requires you to be there, arrange to have your driveway and berm plowed by a private contractor. In the event of a heavy snowfall, you may need to have the contractor plow your berm a couple of times in one day to keep up with our plows, which are also trying to keep up with the snowfall.
- If possible, please help neighbors who are elderly or disabled by shoveling their driveway and berm.
- Do not blow, push, ramp or shovel snow back onto the roadway, City street or public right of way. ***It is against the law.*** Deposit snow on your own residential or commercial property or arrange for a licensed snow removal contractor.
- Please try not to take it personally! City snowplow operators are doing their job and not intentionally trying to create a hardship for you. They also wake up, or come home to a berm that they have to shovel as well.
- Avoid unnecessary travel in winter driving conditions.
- Keep children safe by prohibiting the play along the sides of the road on berms and other snow mounds. Reduced visibility puts children at risk.
- Look twice when pulling out of driveways, parking lots and pulling into street traffic.

City streets are classified as major and minor arterials and collectors, local commercial, and local. These are defined as follows:

Major Arterials: Facilitate relative long trip lengths at moderate to high operating speeds with somewhat limited access to adjacent properties. Major arterials generally serve major centers of activity in urban areas and have the highest traffic volume corridors. These streets are often major gateways to the community.

Minor Arterials: Provide somewhat shorter trip lengths than major arterials, generally interconnect with and augment major arterial routes at moderate operating speeds, and allow somewhat greater access to adjacent properties than major arterials.

Major Collectors: Collect and distribute significant amounts of traffic between arterials, minor collectors and local streets at moderate to low operating speeds. Major collectors provide for more accessibility to adjacent properties than arterials.

Minor Collectors: Collect and distribute moderate amounts of traffic between arterials, major collectors and local streets at relatively low operating speeds with greater accessibility than major collectors.

Local Commercial: Generally provide direct access to commercial properties. The commercial street usually has low volumes, speeds, trip lengths and minimal through traffic.

Local Street: Generally provide direct access to abutting properties. Local streets possess relatively low traffic volumes, operating speeds, trip lengths, and minimal through traffic movements.