

MARQUETTE COUNTY HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

Winter Maintenance Policy

Purpose of Policy:

1. **Level of Service and Hours of Operation:** The Highway Department maintains both State and County Trunk Highways. The Highway Department's goal is to create a "passable roadway", defined as a roadway free from drifts, snow ridges, and as much ice and snow pack as is practical, and can be traveled safely at reasonable speeds.

The Highway Department will make the determination on how to respond to a storm and the appropriate time to begin the snow removal process. The intent is to provide service based on the usage and the traffic volumes to best meet the public and plow operator's health and welfare. Typically, a plow operator's time in the truck should not exceed a continuous 16-18-hour shift.

The State Roads in Marquette County are maintained by the Highway Department.

Marquette County has 3 types of Categories for winter maintenance of the state roads.

Category 2: High volume four-lane roads ADT<25,000 these highways receive 24 hour coverage, during the winter storm event. All lanes and ramps will be maintained equally with emphasis on plowing and sensible salting.

Category 4: High volume two-lane highways with ADT>5,000 receive 18 hour coverage and these driving lanes will be maintained primarily by plowing and sensible salting during the storm event.

Category 5: All other two-lane highways receive 18 hour coverage and these driving lanes will be maintained primarily by plowing and minimal salting.

Category 4 and 5 roads: will have regular winter maintenance during storm events from 4am to 10pm with emergency service between 10pm and 4am. The highway department will strive for "passable roadway" conditions on the driving lanes during the winter storm event. Only enough de-icing agents will be used to keep the total accumulation workable, thereby minimizing bonding during the winter storm event. It is considered inappropriate to attempt to melt the snow as fast as it hits the ground or keep the highway wet so as to eliminate any accumulation or packing, if packing should occur, the highway department will continue to plow and use sensible salting. When the winter storm event ends and conditions allow, the highway department will remove any packed snow and continue working towards the goals of bare/wet and ultimately bare/dry pavement, during normal work hours (including Saturdays and Sundays). During the time between the winter storm event ending and achieving the ultimate goal of bare pavement it is acceptable that only clear wheel tracks be provided when conditions warrant.

For all County Highways, Marquette County will strive for “passable roadways” and “bare pavement” conditions as the storm warrants during normal work hours using plowing methods and sensible salting. The winter maintenance on county highways is from 4am to 6pm and emergency service from 6pm to 4am. County Park boat landings and parking lots will be plowed during regular service hours and only after all clean-up has occurred on the highways or when time permits.

2. **Snow Removal:** As part of the normal snow removal operations snow may be plowed into cross streets and driveways. The Highway Department is not responsible for the plowed snow into private driveways and roadways.
3. **Anti-icing:** Prior to frost and snow events bridges, curves, and shaded areas may be treated by anti-icing. Anti-icing is a liquid salt solution that is sprayed on the roadway that acts as a barrier that will help keep snow and ice from bonding to the road surface. The salt solution may be sprayed on the bridge decks, road pavement prior to a storm event. The early application of the salt solution helps prevent frost from forming on the bridge deck surface overnight.
4. **Impassable Highways:** The Highway Department may at times have to close a road due to the severity of a storm. If weather conditions are so severe that no progress is being made or it is unsafe for our drivers to operate, trucks may be pulled off the road until the conditions improve. Priority will be given to maintain State Highways passable if at all possible. Wis. Stat 893.83 (1) allows the county up to three (3) weeks to remove natural snow and ice accumulations.
5. **Pushing Snow across Highways:** The practice of leaving piles of snow on public highways after plowing private driveways or parking lots creates a hazard for the traveling public and creates a problem for our plowing operation. In some cases, it may cause the person responsible to be held liable for personal injuries or property damage. Per Wisconsin State Statutes 86.01, 86.07 and 346.94(5), it is illegal for persons to leave deposits of any materials on highways. Fines for persistent or repeated violations may be levied. This is an issue of highway and public safety, therefore any costs associated with Marquette County removing this snow or damage to highway equipment will be billed to the property owner responsible.
6. **Following Snow Plows:** There are no state laws that prohibit you from passing a snow plow. However, Per Wisconsin State Statute 346.915, it is illegal to follow a snowplow closer than 200 feet upon any highway having a posted speed limit of more than 35 mph if the snowplow is engaged in snow and ice removal. The majority of crashes involving snowplows and vehicles happen when a snowplow is rear-ended at an intersection. Snowplows have wing plow blades that can extend anywhere from 2 feet to 10 feet beyond the width of the truck. This wing plow is often not seen due to the snow cloud being kicked up from the front plow.

