Snow Removal Policy FAQS

Streets Maintenance Responsibilities:
The City of Homer Public Works Department plows and sands 97.50 lane miles of City Streets as well as an additional 2.54 lane miles of State Roads located within the City limits.

What Is Our Goal?
Our main goal is to provide an expedient and efficient snow removal operation. There are actually two procedures implemented to accomplish this.

1. During snowfalls, snow fighters concentrate on keeping our main arterials passable for emergency vehicles, school busses and high volume traffic flows, and…
2. After the snowfall subsides the crews will concentrate efforts on clearing snow from all streets for general public use as promptly as possible. So yes...neighborhood and residential streets will be cleared last...but all streets are generally cleared within 12-14 hours. During a “significant snow event” this may take longer.

Who Begins A Snow Removal Operation?
During normal business hours, 8:00 a.m. ~ 4:30 p.m., Mondays ~ Fridays, the Public Works Superintendent, or his designee, decides when conditions warrant the commencement of snow removal operations. After hours, the Public Works On-Call Supervisor makes the determination when conditions including, snow, sleet or freezing rain produce hazardous driving conditions. The Public Works Department provides for twenty-four hours of coverage using the On-Call Supervisor system.

Who Clears the Sidewalks & Bike Pathways?

- The City of Homer clears the snow from the sidewalks located on Bartlett St., Hohe St., Pioneer Ave., Heath St., Hazel Ave., Poopdeck St. and Greatland Street. We also clear the snow from the Beluga Slough and Homer Spit Pathways.
- The State of Alaska, ADOT/PF clears the snow from the sidewalks along the Sterling Highway (By-Pass), Lake Street and East End Road.

When Are Streets Plowed?
Usually there are two separate snow removal operations. The first is during the storm itself and consists of quick passes with the plows to keep the roads and streets open. Priority is given to emergency and school bus routes

and the most heavily traveled roads. We strive to plow every road and street at least one time within a 12-14 hour period. Snow tires are always recommended in our climate and periodically chains may be necessary during this period.

The second operation begins when the storm abates. It consists of widening the cleared portion of the traveled ways and cleaning up. This provides space to store additional snow should another storm occur and it improves the safety and usability of the road. Also, the final clean up of pedestrian facilities occurs during this phase of the event.

The time required for each operation varies with the severity of the storm, the temperature, the importance of the road, and the availability of personnel and equipment. Generally we will complete an initial plowing within 12 hours of the storm abatement; however, it may be several days between the first plowing and the final cleanup.

Snow removal operations generally begin when snowfall accumulations have exceeded more than two inches in depth. If the snowfall continues, clean up may be delayed until after the snowfall event has subsided. In all cases clean up procedures will commence before six inches of snow accumulation.

During significant snowstorm events our crews will be called in to commence operations at 4:00 a.m. and remain on duty until the event has subsided or becomes manageable.

When Are Streets Sanded?
The top priorities for sanding are the main arteries, intersections, school bus routes and steep roads (particularly north/south streets). Sanding generally commences at 4:00 a.m. prior to the school busses leaving for their respective routes. If a significant snowfall has or is occurring, sanding may be delayed due to the fact that the sand shall just be covered up by the snow.

It is common for the employee who is performing the sanding to perform “skid tests” at several locations to determine which areas require sanding the most. Rain on clear and/or snow packed roads are a serious problem in the Homer area and can cause severe and dangerous driving conditions. During this occurrence it is difficult to keep sand on the streets and we advise extra caution during these periods.

Which Streets Are Cleared First?
As previously stated, our number one goal is to maintain the main arterials for emergency response equipment.

- **Priority 1 ~ Pioneer Ave., Main St. and Bartlett & Hohe St. (ambulance routes to hospital)**
- **Priority 2 ~ All main arterial collectors including school bus routes.**
- **Priority 3 ~ All other streets including residential areas.**

At times some flexibility is required to this plan due to the amount of snowfall or equipment break down. During snow removal operations we try to keep the graders and other snow removal equipment plowing rather than moving from one end of town to the other. Other reasons for flexibility are time of day and school bus schedules.

Driveways & Snow Berms:
The City is not responsible to clear snow berms from your driveway. During normal snow plowing events and clean-up operations after a heavy snowfall we endeavor to minimize driveway snow berms by using "snow gates" on our equipment.

However, during significant snowfall events and at times when the snow is very wet and heavy, or when we experience equipment failure, we may not be able to use our “snow gates” on our equipment. This may cause a “snow berm” across your driveway.

When we have completed clearing the streets and the snow event has subsided, we shall commence our final clean up operations and endeavor to assist with removal of the “snow berm”, based upon time, manpower and equipment availability. This may take several days depending upon the severity of the snow event.

While we realize that this may, at times, cause problems and inconvenience .... PLEASE BE PATIENT….If you have an EMERGENCY call the Homer Police Department Dispatch at 235-3150.

Who Clears States Routes?

The Department of Transportation and Public Facilities clears approximately 20 miles of state roadways within the City of Homer. These roads include the Sterling Hwy., West Hill Rd., East Hill Rd., East End Road, Kachemak Drive, Homer Spit Road, Ocean Drive and Lake Street between Pioneer Ave and the By-Pass. Call DOT/PF @ 235-5217 for further information concerning their roads maintenance.

How Can You Help?
You can assist our employees and equipment operators in several ways.

- Always park your vehicle off of the street. This will prevent possible damage to your vehicle and save you a possible ticket and/or towing charge.
- Advise your children to never play near or in a snow berm near the roadway.
- Do not follow equipment too closely. Please be patient if you are required to wait behind a piece of snow removal equipment.
- Make certain that your speed is reasonable for conditions.
- Pile the snow past the driveway in the direction of travel. This will help minimize the size of any snow berms across your driveway.
- Inform your snowplow contractor that it is illegal to push snow onto or across the roadway.

Hopefully, we can all work together to successfully handle this winter's problems. If you have any questions please contact Jan C. Jonker, Operations Superintendent, or Rusty Cheney, Lead Operator at (907) 235-3170.
Please, Buckle Up For Safety and Enjoy our Winter Wonderland

City of Homer
Public Works Department
During normal business hours we may be contacted at 235-3170.
After hours & for emergencies the On-Call Supervisor may be contacted by calling the Homer Police Department Dispatch at 235-3150.

Revised 11/10/2011

Web Links

Road Maintenance MapSnow Removal Policy

Source URL (retrieved on *2013-12-12 09:56*):
http://www.cityofhomer-ak.gov/publicworks/snow-removal-policy-faqs