

Township of River Vale  
Department of Public Works

**Frequently Asked Questions Regarding Winter Operations**

*Our mission is to keep streets passable and reasonably safe during the storm and to clear the streets, curb to curb, within 8 hours after the storm has ended.*

**Why do you have to plow curb to curb?**

- To make sure the catch basins throughout town are clear to accept water, and
- To maintain the travel width of the street. In a normal winter, the snow berms at the side of the street can gradually reduce the travel width of the street, and
- Access for emergency vehicles

**The catch basin on my street is covered with snow. Who is responsible to clear it?**

The DPW, but any assistance by abutting property owners would help and be appreciated.

**I live on a cul-de-sac and I get more snow in my driveway and on my property than anywhere else in town. Why?**

Plowing cul-de-sacs is one of the most challenging operations during a snow storm. Most properties on cul-de-sacs have frontages which are narrower than lots on a straight street. Therefore, snow must be pushed into a smaller space. Cul-de-sacs without islands contain even more area which needs to be plowed and, as a result, even more snow has to be moved to the side.

**Why do the plow trucks have to drive so fast?**

The goal is to get the snow off the street. The speed of the truck is directly related to any combinations of the following factors: 1) The volume of snow on the street, 2) The consistency of the snow, and 3) The height of the berms on the side of the street. The plow truck must travel faster to throw heavier and/or deeper snow over higher berms.

**When will my street be plowed?**

Main streets and areas around schools (when they are in session) are plowed first and then residential streets. The reason are: 1) The main streets carry the most traffic volume, and 2) We want the ingress to and egress from the schools to be as safe as possible. It takes us up to 8 hours to completely clear a snow plow route. Unfortunately, someone on that route will be first and someone will be last.

**Why do you put snow on my sidewalk and in my driveway?**

This is not done intentionally. Snow cast onto side walks and into driveways is an unfortunate byproduct of a very necessary service we provide. When we plow a street we are simply moving the snow that is in the street off to the side of the street. The greater the amount of snow, the more snow that is deposited on the side. A normal cast from the plow is up to 8 feet. Sidewalks and driveways are necessarily located in that cast zone. (see below illustration)

**Is it illegal to place snow in the street?**

Yes. Property owners or their landscapers are required to place the snow from their sidewalks and driveway onto their property

**Who is responsible for clearing the handicapped sidewalk ramp at the corner of my property?**

Handicapped ramps are considered part of the sidewalk system and therefore, it is the responsibility of the abutting property owner to keep them clear.

**Who determines the need to prepare the roads for a snow storm?**

DPW monitors the weather to determine the application brine system. The River Vale Police Department alerts the DPW of road conditions for salting and the Superintendent directs the plowing event.

**How long do I have to clear my sidewalk?**

12 hours from the time the storm ends

**Who is responsible for clearing the fire hydrants?**

The Fire Department is responsible for fire hydrants except those which are part of private fire suppression systems, but any assistance by abutting property owners would help and be appreciated.

**SNOW REMOVAL REMINDER FROM YOUR PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT**

Our streets must be cleared from curb to curb. Sometimes this takes many passes with the plows and, to the dismay of some residents, sometimes snow that they cleared from their driveway, gets pushed back in.

In order to avoid clearing your driveway twice, pile snow on the left side, with you facing your house, of your driveway (see illustration below). This can minimize the amount of snow pushed back into your driveway. Please do not shovel snow onto the street.

Also please park all vehicles in your driveway during snowstorms. This will save you time shoveling and it will keep the road clear for plows and emergency vehicles to maneuver. Also the front of your residences will be clear for later parking.

