



MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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RE: Town crews ready for winter weather

AMHERST, Nova Scotia – Amherst is all geared up for whatever Old Man Winter has in store for us this season, says Jason MacDonald, the town's Deputy CAO-Operations.

The town's 13 full-time and six seasonal operators are ready to work and its fleet of equipment – three loaders with snowplows attached, two snowplow trucks, two salt trucks, three sidewalk snowblowers, two backhoes and one loader-mounted snowblower – has been prepared to meet the blizzards whenever they hit.



AN AMHERST SNOWPLOW CLEARS SNOW FROM VICTORIA STREET LAST JANUARY (TOM MCCOAG /TOWN OF AMHERST)

As in past years, plowing will begin whenever the snowfall reaches between five and 10 centimetres and the weather forecast predicts the white stuff will continue to fall.

“The objective is that all streets will be cleared of snow within six hours from the end of a snowstorm of up to 30 centimetres,” MacDonald told councillors at their Nov. 16, 2020, committee of the whole meeting.



TOWN OF Amherst NOVA SCOTIA

The operators' first priority is to plow arterial streets continuously during such a storm, visibility permitting, MacDonald said. The goal is to plow to bare pavement whenever possible on these streets. Salting is carried out as needed.

He noted that "hard pack snow is the service level standard for roads, except those on the salt routes, which include all arterial streets, major intersections and hilly streets.

Town crews will attempt to create a "bare pavement condition" within 12 hours of a snowfall that dumps up to 30 centimetres on the town on the following streets: Victoria, Church, Willow, Albion, South Albion, Lawrence, Laplanche, West Pleasant, East Pleasant and Hickman streets as well as Robert Angus Drive.



AN AMHERST SNOWPLOW MOVES AROUND A PARKED CAR DURING A JANUARY 2020 SNOWSTORM. FOLKS ARE REMINDED THAT A TOWN BYLAW PROHIBITS PARKING ON TOWN STREETS WHILE SNOWPLOW OPERATIONS ARE UNDERWAY. (TOM MCCOAG / TOWN OF AMHERST)

During major snowstorms – those where the plows cannot keep up with the falling snow – crews will work to keep one lane on 24 specific streets open. The town hall, stadium and fire station parking lots will also be kept open in order to provide emergency parking.

Last winter, snowplow operators dealt with 12 storms that dumped 30 centimetres of snow or less and one that dumped more than 30 centimetres, MacDonald said.



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When there is a snowfall of 10 centimetres or more, the goal is to have snow hauled away from the downtown and Albion street areas as well as from around the elementary schools within 48 hours.

MacDonald noted that last year snow had to be hauled from the downtown three times and once on South Albion Street.

When it comes to clearing sidewalks, the objective is to have all of them cleared of snow within 24 hours of the end of street plowing operations, when storms of 30 centimeters or less hit. Priority will be given to sidewalks in school zones, the downtown and arterial streets. Downtown sidewalks will be salted, while all other sidewalks will be sanded, MacDonald said.



TOWN CREWS CLEAR SNOW FROM THE DOWNTOWN FOLLOWING A 2019 SNOWSTORM
(TOM MCCOAG / TOWN OF AMHERST)

He noted that within the downtown Amherst's snow removal bylaw requires the town to clear a 42-inch path along a sidewalk, but it is a business owner's responsibility to "maintain this path free of snow and ice."

Clearing of the town's parking lots are tendered out to the private sector, with those serving office buildings having to be cleared by 8 a.m.

He reminded motorists that a winter parking ban is in effect that requires all vehicles to be off the streets between midnight and 7 a.m. and any time snowplow operations are underway between now and April 15, 2021.



TOWN OF Amherst NOVA SCOTIA

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