

Nederland Snow Policy and FAQ's

Greetings from The Town of Nederland Public Works' Snow Removal and Maintenance Team!

The Town of Nederland receives many inquiries about Nederland's snow plowing policy and the reasoning behind the determinations made with regard to plowing operations. To respond to the concerns and challenges from previous years regarding snow removal, we are establishing a new policy that requires your participation. It is our hope that this will answer some common plowing questions.

The Town of Nederland has guidelines that determine when plow drivers are out. Please be aware that snow removal operations are extremely demanding of trucks and machinery, and sometimes machinery breaks down. Plowing is not always a quick process either.

- **Plowing operations will not commence early unless there is at least 4 inches of snow on the ground, which is measured at the Town Shop.**
 - The measurement is made at 3 am, followed by the determination of whether or not plow drivers will be dispatched at 4am.
 - If less than 4 inches on the ground, there may be plowing and sanding in critical areas only.
 - Critical areas are areas where even a little snow can cause a dangerous condition, to include school bus routes or any other area we feel needs extra attention.
- **Plowing will start at 4am and continue until no later than 8pm, unless the storm requires extended plowing hours to keep emergency routes open.**
- **When plowing, drivers have Primary, Secondary, and tertiary routes.** Please refer to the snow plowing map on this page. This map also shows those critical areas that may get sanded and plowed if less than 4 inches of snow, as well as CDOT's and Boulder County's responsibilities.
 - **Primary routes** are determined as those routes most frequently used/heavily trafficked and along school bus and emergency routes.
 - **Secondary routes** are collector roads or handle less traffic.
 - **Tertiary routes** are always going to be the last areas hit by plows which include cul de sacs.
- **Public Works has a protocol to clear the roads most efficiently, which necessitates keeping plow blades turned outward and making a single pass in each direction to open up the whole road at one time.**
 - Public Works is not capable of meeting special requests such as clearing driveway entrances, turning plow blades, staying certain distances from parked cars, or increase/decrease of speeds in certain areas.
- **Damage to paved driveways that extend into the Town's right-of-way are not the town's responsibility.**
- **Damage to vehicles parked within the Town's right-of-way during any snow event are not the town's responsibility.**

- Parking a vehicle within the Town's right-of-way is prohibited per Article 3, Sec. 8-41 Snow Emergency Routes, therefore the burden of assuring safe parking is upon the vehicle owner.

General Considerations:

Public Works understands that snow events major and minor can be an inconvenience, but we do live in an area with an average snowfall of 140 inches per year (Western Regional Climate Center), with high winds and snow drifts.

- Nederland's small plowing crew and older equipment can necessitate a focus upon the main arteries, and will require extra time to address other areas. *Please bear in mind that the level of service the town is able to provide is not on par with CDOT, Boulder County, or the City of Boulder.*

Mountain living is not always easy, but it is the lifestyle we have chosen.

- The citizens of Nederland need to bear some responsibility to ensure safe transit as well. Choosing a vehicle suited to winter driving conditions and/or appropriate tires, allowing extra commute time, maintaining patience and respect for other drivers as well as our dedicated plow drivers can help make the winter driving experience less stressful overall.

Snow is a normal aspect of mountain living for much of the year.

- Expect delays and plan ahead, for *everyone's* safety.

Nederland is growing and the needs of the town are growing as well.

- We often hear, "That's not how they used to do things!" When the population was smaller, there was an effort to meet individual requests around plowing. This is no longer an option. The intention of this policy is to educate and attempt to provide equal treatment for all residents.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's)

- 1. *I am a volunteer firefighter and sometimes have to leave on short notice. Why can't the plow drivers turn the plow away from my driveway to ensure a faster response?***

Although we have much respect for all volunteers and first responders in Nederland we cannot turn the plow for people to keep their driveways clear. It is the responsibility of the home owner to keep the end of their driveway clear and the responsibility of Town plow drivers to keep the road clear. Providing this service to one person means we have to provide the same to all residents. Keeping plows turned to the right at all times is the most efficient and safest way to plow roads and is the only way Nederland's plow drivers will plow the Towns roads.

- 2. *I am elderly and physically unable to shovel the end of my driveway and cannot afford to pay someone to do this for me. Shouldn't the Town do this for me since they put the snow there?***

It is not financially feasible for the Town to do this, and past experience has illustrated that some residents tried to take advantage of the service. Nederland residents can contact Ice Busters, a volunteer snow removal group at 303-443-1933 ext. 416.

- 3. *I live at the end of a Cul-de-sac; sometimes a plow may not come by until late morning. Can't the plows hit my road first for once?***

Plow routes are set up by Primary, Secondary, and tertiary roads. Cul-de-sacs are a tertiary route. The road your cul-de-sac empties onto is a Primary or Secondary road. Primary roads handle heavy traffic or are school bus or emergency routes. Secondary are collector routes or handle smaller volumes of traffic but, may still have a school bus stop. Tertiary routes, usually only service the people who live on them and are usually a short distance to a plowed road. The Nederland Fire Department has a plow truck to provide access in the event of an emergency.

- 4. *I was heading to work in a hurry, and there was a plow truck as I came around the corner. The driver did not yield, so I had to go around it and almost went into a ditch. It really scared me and I wonder why the driver didn't yield to me?***

Plow equipment can be very difficult to drive and with multiple functions operating simultaneously. Plow drivers are often running the plow, sander, and trying to keep forward momentum, especially uphill. Uphill traffic always has the right of way. For large trucks with plows or large machinery this is a courtesy we cannot always provide as losing momentum can cause a plow truck to get stuck. When a plow truck gets stuck, it requires a minimum of 2 plow drivers to pull the vehicle out. **Challenging plow equipment is dangerous for everyone!** Plow trucks may be encountered on town roads at any time during and after a storm, and depending on conditions, may necessitate clean up for several weeks. Always allow the driver plenty of space and extra transit time to get to your destination during winter driving conditions.

5. *Why isn't every member of the Public Works department out plowing during a storm?*

The Town only employs seven people in the Public Works department. Two employees are dedicated to ensure Town has clean drinking water and proper wastewater processing, which is a full time job to keep up with state standards. This leaves 5 employees to plow over a sixteen-hour timeframe. Three drivers begin at 4am with 2 other employees starting at noon, who work until 8pm. At times, drivers will work a 12-hour shift, so that with an overlap of schedules there may be up to 5 drivers out for a few hours. Snow plowing is extremely hard on equipment and machinery breaks down. If a vital piece of plowing equipment fails, it will need to be fixed. Employees also get sick or take time off to deal with personal issues or are scheduled to attend training. Please remember that the Town of Nederland has limited resources and a small staff who appreciate your patience and the understanding that we are doing everything we can.

6. *I drive a two wheel drive car that gets stuck in my driveway when it snows. I park on the road during storms, but am afraid a plow will hit my car. Can't drivers be careful of my car and/or not pile snow in the parking spot when my car is not there?*

Please be aware that parking on town roads during a snow storm or with any accumulation of snow in excess of six (6) inches, whether due to falling, drifting or blowing snow is prohibited, as specified within the Nederland Municipal Code, Sec. 8-41 "No Parking or stopping along snow routes". NMC, Sec. 8-21 "Parking prohibited where" also prohibits parking on any public street, alley or any public way that has less than 26 feet of open and maintained width. Parking vehicles on Town roads creates obstacles that drivers must plow around and increased potential for damaging maintenance equipment or your car. Vehicular damage incurred due to disregard of Town codes is not the Town's responsibility, nor will damage be covered by the Town's insurance. Be aware this is a hazardous situation for plow drivers. Plow drivers cannot be responsible for the choice of where you park.