



CITY OF MUSCATINE
215 SYCAMORE STREET
MUSCATINE, IA 52761
PH. (563) 264-1550 • FAX (563) 264-0750

CITY OF MUSCATINE PRESS RELEASE

For more information contact:

Kevin Jenison
Communication Manager
E-Mail: kjenison@muscatineia.gov
Phone: (563) 264-1550 • Fax: (563) 264-0750

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
JANUARY 04, 2021

LONG HOURS OF WORK TO PUSH SNOW & ICE TO THE CURB

Two storms with snow, sleet, and ice create many challenges for plow crews

MUSCATINE, Iowa – Every storm is different and last week’s winter storm was not any different. With over seven inches of snow mixed with sleet, rain, and freezing rain last week’s storm was a difficult one to keep up with.

“We were prepared and had a good game plan to take on this storm,” Brian Stineman, Public Works Director said. “But then we had a snow rate of nearly two inches per hour during the initial snowfall and that made us play catchup.”

Crews working in 12-hour shifts worked tirelessly from Wednesday through Sunday salting the streets and pushing the slushy snow that was topped with freezing rain.

“The ice combined with the snow just made things more difficult for our drivers,” Stineman said. “And it took longer to work the streets.”

The combination of ice and snow was just one of the challenges faced by the snow plow drivers whether they were on the day shift or night shift. Drivers also had to work around cars parked on the street and the changing weather conditions.

Drivers came from all departments to help with the snow removal effort and accumulated over 50 hours of overtime.

“They are tired,” Stineman said. “But I am very proud of their effort.”

City crews were out early Wednesday with salt and sand and then turned their attention to plowing once the snow reached two inches. Five designated emergency routes were cleared first as crews cleared the driving lanes and then came back to push the snow further to the curb. Once the emergency routes were cleared, attention turned to the residential streets and alleys.

The City has a fleet of six snowplows that were backed up by one-ton trucks called into service to assist in the removal of the snow and ice.

Stineman noted that it normally takes four hours to complete a salt run on each route and approximately seven hours to complete plowing on each route. This removal effort extended those time estimates.

“And if you are on the end of one of these routes you may not see a truck until you have four inches or more of snow on the ground,” Stineman said. “We do our best to get to everybody as quickly and safely as we can.”

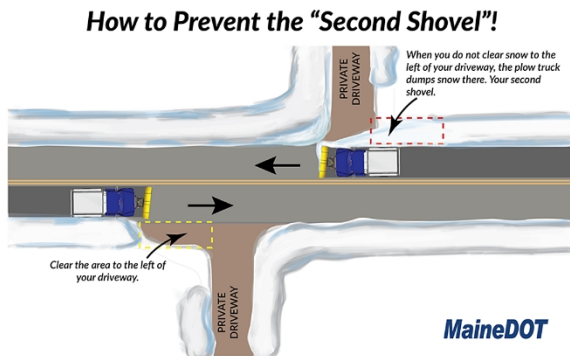
Mike Hartman, Assistant Fire Chief, eased concerns that emergency crews would not be able to get to an individual’s residence.

“Whatever it takes, we will get to you,” Hartman said. “And we will get you to the help you need.”

As crews worked to clear the streets, the Department of Public Works received phone calls of driveways being blocked by the ice and snow pushed to the curb.

“We ask the public’s patience but at this time we do not have the equipment that would prevent driveways from being blocked,” Stineman said.

That equipment, called a snow gate, is on the wish list for Stineman but using a snowplow or grader equipment with a snow gate would double the time needed to clear the streets.



There is a way that the public can help prevent the buildup of ice and snow in front of their drives and that is by clearing an area to the left of the driveway as pictured to the left in this graphic from the Maine Department of Transportation.

Since plows push the snow to the right as they move down the street, having an area cleared for the snow and ice to be deposited prevents that buildup in front of the driver, thus preventing a “second shovel”.

The public can also help speed up the snow removal process by making sure that they utilize off-street parking when possible to give the snowplows plenty of room to push the snow and ice to the curb.

A parking plan for any snow event is part of the “Snow Emergency” procedure of the City of Muscatine and that includes parking on alternate sides of the street according to whether it is an odd or even day.

Another question posed to the Department of Public Works was why a “Snow Emergency” was not declared.

“Snow Emergencies mainly help with the clean up after the storm moves out,” Stineman said. “It just brings enforcement measures into play for removing vehicles parked on the street.”

With or without a snow emergency being declared, Stineman emphasized that the best way for the public to help ensure the efficient and safe removal of snow and ice is to park off-street or to adhere to the alternate side of parking if off-street is not an option.



CITY OF MUSCATINE
215 SYCAMORE STREET
MUSCATINE, IA 52761
PH. (563) 264-1550 • FAX (563) 264-0750

Stineman added that there is always something learned from events like this and he will be meeting with his staff to discuss what could have been done better.

“With the way this storm and the second storm moved through our area, I believe our staff did an outstanding job despite the long hours,” Stineman said.