



ENGINEERING AND SECONDARY ROAD DEPARTMENT LINN COUNTY, IOWA

Title: Winter Maintenance Operations		Policy Number: SR-12	
Responsible Department: Engineering and Secondary Road Department			
Revision No: 07	Revision Date: 07/14/2021	Policy Effective Date: 07/14/2021	Expiration Date: Until Repealed
Initial Approval Date: 01/25/2007		Distribution: Secondary Road Maintenance Crews, Internet	

I. PURPOSE & OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this policy is to communicate standard procedures for winter maintenance operations, including documentation, evaluation, and determinations for the appropriate response to winter weather conditions affecting the Linn County secondary road system.

The objectives of this policy are to enhance the use of the Linn County secondary road system by outlining procedures, documentation of road conditions, and factors considered for response, and to identify the positions responsible for approving and conducting winter maintenance operations.

II. SCOPE

This policy pertains to winter maintenance operations conducted by the Department on roads in Linn County jurisdiction, responsibility by agreement, responsibility by general emergency declaration or responsibility by site emergency in accordance with the Linn County Snow and Ice Control Ordinance.

III. EXCEPTIONS

None.

IV. DEFINITIONS

Department: The Linn County Secondary Road Department

Extended Hours: 4 a.m. to 7 a.m., 3:30 p.m. to 6 p.m., Monday through Friday, and 4 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Saturday, Sunday, and holidays.

General Emergency: A situation declared by the Governor of Iowa or the Linn County Board of Supervisors. The Governor and/or Board of Supervisors may direct Secondary Road Department personnel and equipment during declared events.

Incident Commander: The emergency response person in charge of the site emergency.

Normal Hours: 7 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Priority Route: Designated hard surfaced roads that receive a higher level of snow service based on traffic count and use.

Site Emergency: An incident that requires medical, fire department, or law enforcement personnel to render aid including fires, or traffic crashes involving serious injury, and/or medical or life-threatening situations.

Standard Route: All roads that receive snow service from the Linn County Secondary Road Department either by jurisdiction or through a county/city 28E Agreement.

V. PROVISIONS

- A. The Department does not have a “dry pavement” policy, but instead works to improve road surface conditions within the operational parameters established by existing contracts, agreements, and ordinances. During a site emergency, the incident commander will coordinate requested assistance through the County Engineer or designee, and will direct department activity on site during the site emergency.
- B. During a snow event, the Linn County Secondary Road Superintendent or designee will record and evaluate road conditions during normal working hours. These conditions may include wind speed and direction, air and pavement temperatures, and road surface conditions (wet/dry) when these parameters are available or measured, time of day, and whether or not conditions are likely to change throughout the day. The Road Superintendent or designee may estimate or observe the recorded information. Personnel involved in responses to winter weather events and emergencies should document their actions during the events.
- C. Generally, one inch of snow accumulation may trigger a response on priority routes; however, wind conditions may affect the type of response and treatment. For example: wind may blow the snow off of the road when more than one inch of snow is reported, making a response unnecessary. Snow with accumulation may trigger action based on expected weather conditions, such as: dropping temperatures with wet snow or additional snowfall.
- D. The Department uses a “graduated response approach,” which identifies priority and standard routes, to provide a limited but flexible response to winter snow and ice events. The graduated response includes priority routes that receive snow services during extended operating hours and standard routes that receive snow services during normal operating hours.
- E. The department will plow rock-surfaced roads initially to provide for one lane of traffic, and plow further during regular business hours to provide for two-lane access. The department does not plow on weekends unless roads are impassable. Generally, five or more inches of blowing and drifting snow will trigger extended-hour activity on rock roads.

- F. Traffic volume varies during the day, which department personnel should consider in directing operations. For example: traffic on commuter routes increases from 7 am to 9 am and from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. with people driving to and from work.
- G. Department personnel may evaluate other information such as staffing levels, types of equipment available to plow, and crew and equipment readiness for the next day, and factor that information into the decision process.
- H. The department completes winter maintenance operations in accordance with Linn County ordinances, policies, and departmental procedures in place at the time of the event.
- I. The Department will evaluate mailboxes, fences, and other private fixtures damaged during snow and ice removal on a case by case basis and will repair at county expense only such items damaged by contact with county equipment. The Department will not provide special mailbox installations or decorative designs. The Department will replace mailbox supports damaged during snow and ice removal with a 4" x 4" wooden post, bracket, and standard mailbox kit. Linn County does not assume the ownership of mailboxes, fences, and other private fixtures it repairs as a result of damage caused during snow and ice removal.

VI. ENFORCEMENT

The county engineer has the responsibility to enforce this policy and to enlist the cooperation of employees in accomplishing its objectives. The human resources director will review disciplinary actions taken pursuant to this policy and will refer actions to the Board of Supervisors for consideration, if necessary. If, in the opinion of the Board of Supervisors, the strict application of this policy in a specific instance does not serve the best interests of Linn County, the Board may waive or modify the provisions of this policy.