

## **PENNINGTON COUNTY, SOUTH DAKOTA SNOW REMOVAL POLICY**

### **PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this policy is to formalize and establish Pennington County's policy and level of service in respect to removal of snow or ice and regarding placing sand, salt or other abrasive material on its county highway road system, pursuant to the South Dakota Codified Law.

The board of county commissioners with the county highway superintendent shall be the sole judges as to the necessity, need, and emergencies for snow removal operations and repairs, and shall exercise full discretion with decisions relative thereto. The County Highway Superintendent, or his assignee, has the responsibility for initiating all snow removal actions using his best judgment and considering all prevailing weather conditions, amount of snow fall, type of snow fall and what areas are affected most.

Pennington County will initiate snow removal operations to maintain traffic as long as visibility is above minimum, and weather conditions are such that plowing can be done safely and be effective for at least five hours.

The general practice will be as follows: When snow fall is at least two inches, but less than four inches, all hard surfaced roads will be plowed during normal working hours, provided that the prevailing winds are such that snow remains on the traveled portion of the road. With a snow fall of four inches or more, all gravel roads, as well as hard surface roads will be plowed during normal working hours. At this time, plowing may commence before and after normal working hours, as well as weekends and holidays. The snow removal operations will be initiated out of each division shop, as warranted.

The entire width of that portion of the road improved for travel may not be cleared of snow, ice, compacted snow and ice, or frost. Snow cleared from that part of the roadway improved for travel shall be placed on or in the adjacent shoulder, ditch, or right-of-way except that during removal operations, snow may be temporarily stored on a portion of the traveled way. The snow removed from intersections will be piled in their corners and may result in piles of unequal height. The County shall not be responsible for snow pushed or otherwise placed on the roadway or shoulders by others.

### **PRIORITIZATION:**

The priority of which roads are plowed, and in what sequence, is left up to the Highway Superintendent and/or designees from each division, taking into account the reported amounts, type, and areas where the snow falls. Generally, priorities will be all hard surfaced roads. Gravel roads with residences will be the next priority with the main Farm to Market routes having preference in this category, while dead end roads will be last in this category. All roads will first be plowed to enable everyone access from one direction. These roads then will be opened to two-way traffic. Roads may be plowed out of sequence where it would contribute to efficiency of the snow removal operations.

**SANDING:**

It is the County's policy to sand only paved roads at stop intersections, curves and steep hills. Other locations on paved roads may be sanded if persistent icy conditions remain for a number of days. Sanding will commence during normal working hours unless notified by the sheriff or other law enforcement officials that conditions are such that we are asked to commence sanding immediately. Sanding is initiated out of each division shop as deemed necessary, and will work out toward each division's furthest boundary.

**LIMITATION OF SERVICE:**

It is not the general policy of Pennington County to perform any of the following services:

A. Sanding, salting, or placing of other abrasives upon a roadway which is slick, slippery or dangerous due to the formation of frost outside normal working hours.

B. Sanding, salting, or placing other abrasives upon hard surfaced roads due to ice formation which occurs outside the county's normal working hours, Monday through Friday, on Saturdays, Sundays or holidays.

C. Sanding, salting or placing of other abrasives upon Gravel roads.

D. Placing of additional warning or regulatory signs warning of impaired sight distances, visibility at intersections, road blockages, one-lane conditions, or that the road surface is slick or slippery, or what the advised speed should be.

**EMERGENCY CONDITION:**

An "Emergency" condition shall be considered as one where a loss of life is probable, where a serious injury has occurred or is probable, or where extensive loss of property is imminent. Reports of such emergencies should be made directly to the Pennington County Sheriff's Office. The existence of any such condition shall be determined by the Pennington County Sheriff's Office. Upon the determination of the existence of an emergency condition, the Sheriff's Office shall implement appropriate emergency procedures including snow removal unit operation if warranted by the nature of the emergency condition. Snow removal crews will provide necessary assistance in opening a road or driveway, to give access to the necessary emergency crews.

**SECONDARY ROADS AND PRIVATE ROADS:**

The County will not operate snow removal units on non-maintained roads, secondary roads or private roads. Normal county removal operations may result in snow or ice being deposited in private roads and drives adjacent to public roads. Snow from private drives shall not be placed on the shoulders or in the right-of-way of a public road.

**STALLED OR STRANDED VEHICLES:**

Any stalled or stranded vehicles (attended or unattended) that interfere with snow and ice removal, sanding, salting, or placing of other abrasives will be towed. Stalled or stranded vehicles that impede the passage of snow removal equipment or present a hazard to traffic will first be moved to the side of the road by the highway department and then towed. The county shall not be liable for any damage to stalled or stranded vehicles left on the traveled portion of the roadway or other obstructions which interfere with snow and ice removal, sanding, salting, or placing of other abrasives. Vehicle owners shall be responsible for all costs associated with moving, towing and storage of the vehicles.

**RURAL MAILBOXES:**

The County shall not pay for damaged mailboxes unless actual contact is made by a snow removal unit. Residents should mark mailboxes in drift prone areas to help maintenance workers avoid them. Claims for damaged mailboxes are to be submitted to the Pennington County Highway Department within 48 hours to be considered for payment.

**FENCES:**

The County shall not pay for damaged fences unless actual contact is made by the snow removal unit. Claims for damaged fences are to be submitted to the Pennington County Highway Department within 30 days to be considered for payment.

**REPORTS:**

A Storm Record shall be completed for each snow removal operation. This record should contain operating times, weather conditions, resources committed, and results.

**DISCLAIMER:**

To the extent that any previous rule, regulation, policy or past practice, written or unwritten, is in conflict with the provisions of this policy, such is hereby withdrawn, voided and all personnel should conduct themselves in conformity with this policy.

This policy is not intended to create any duty of Pennington County to any individual member of the public or to protect any particular or circumscribed class of persons. All or parts of this policy may be affected by at least one or more of the following which will delay all or some of the services provided:

1. Equipment breakdown;
2. Vehicles disabled in deep snow;
3. Weather so severe as to cause crews to suspend snow removal from County roads;
4. Equipment rendered inadequate by the depth of snow or drifts;
5. Crew breaks, and breaks required for refueling, refilling of material spreaders and installing chains and new blades;
6. Unforeseen conditions and emergencies.

Adopted this 16TH day of DECEMBER, 2008.



County Auditor

*William W. [Signature]*  
Deputy Auditor

*Brenda Young*  
Chairperson, Board of Commissioners