



# Commerce City

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### Snow Operations Plan

#### Summary and Background Information:

##### BACKGROUND

Snow is a regular and disruptive occurrence in Commerce City. Heavy snowfalls, frequently coupled with ice and high wind significantly impede the movement of residents and goods and pose a serious hazard to safety. With heavy snowfall possible at any point between early September and late May, the City needs to be prepared to respond to snow events in a way that ensures safety for residents and preserves mobility for traffic. The City's snow operations plan outlines how the City meets these challenges in a way that provides operationally effective and fiscally responsible service.

##### PROCESS

The snow operations plan requires the cooperation of several divisions within the Public Works Department. Through cooperation and resource sharing, these divisions deliver a highly coordinated and efficient response. The Streets Division is responsible for maintaining the City's road networks. Each street is assigned a priority that dictates at what point it will be treated for snow and ice. The Parks Division is responsible for maintaining all City-owned facilities, including the Civic Center, Municipal Services Center, and both recreation centers, as well as all parks and trails within the City. They are able to keep City buildings open around the clock to support emergency operations. The Fleet division supports both Parks and Streets by ensuring all vehicles and equipment are fully ready for any snow event.

This plan is maintained by the Public Works Department and updated each year based on detailed after action reports conducted after every snowstorm. This feedback allows leadership to implement continuous improvement and enhance efficiency and effectiveness each year. Responding to a snowstorm is resource-intensive; being able to deliver an around the clock response on any day requires a high degree of coordination and demands efficiency in order to responsibly steward taxpayer money.

##### PLAN

The snow plan delineates the level of service provided based on the severity of the storm. The more severe the storm is, the narrower the focus of the response becomes, targeting only the most vital roads necessary to facilitate emergency response. Less severe storms allow the department to keep larger portions of the City's roadways clear. The storms are classified as follows:

- Class 1 - A storm predicted to last less than 12 hours with anticipated accumulation of 4 inches or less
- Class 2 - A storm predicted to last more than 12 hours with anticipated accumulation

between 4 and 8 inches

- Class 3 - A storm predicted to be extreme in nature, lasting greater than 24 hours with accumulation greater than 8 inches

Public Works monitors several different forecasts and weather models in order to anticipate the classification of each anticipated storm. This allows the department to prepare the appropriate personnel and equipment ahead of time and have them staged and ready. Once activated, Public Works can begin its response within one hour, no matter the time or day. Activation comes from supervisory staff either within Public Works or the Police Department.

As outlined in the plan, streets are classified based on priority as follows:

- Priority 1 - Major arterials considered to be the minimum network, which must be kept open to provide a transportation system connecting hospitals, fire stations, police stations, and other emergency units
- Priority 2 - All remaining arterials and selected collectors completing the network covering the major traffic volume streets or providing access to schools
- Priority 3 - All remaining collectors, bus routes, and hilly areas
- Priority 4 - Streets primarily located in residential areas. Priority 4 streets are plowed only when snow accumulations completely block traffic movement

Based on current conditions and the storm classification, Streets provides the following levels of service:

- Class 1 - Snow removal on Priority 1, 2, and 3 streets. Every attempt will be made to clear snow from all travel lanes of Priority 1 and 2 streets, and provide at least one treated travel lane on Priority 3 streets
- Class 2 - Teams will concentrate on removing snow and ice from Priority 1 and 2 streets. After the storm has subsided, or when sufficient clearing of the Priority 1 and 2 streets has occurred, maintenance teams will plow and de-ice Priority 3 streets
- Class 3 - Snowfall may be so heavy that only Priority 1 streets can be maintained in a passable condition until the storm subsides. After sufficient clearing of Priority 1 streets, teams will plow and sand all Priority 2 streets and then proceed to Priority 3 streets

Parks uses a similar classification system to determine the appropriate levels of service in their areas of responsibility. The division is responsible for all parks and trails, as well as City facilities.

- Priority 1 - Civic Center, Derby parking areas, Municipal Services Center, Recreation Centers, and Center Community Center
- Priority 2 - City owned/maintained properties- perimeter sidewalks, parking areas, paved trails

Based on current conditions and the storm classification, Parks provides the following levels of service:

- Class 1 - Areas designated as Priority 1 will receive immediate attention, followed by all remaining areas designated as Priority 2
- Class 2 - Areas designated as Priority 1 will receive immediate attention, followed by all remaining areas designated as Priority 2. During such storms, service to parking lots, sidewalks, and trails designated as Priority 2 may be delayed
- Class 3 - Areas designated as Priority 1 will receive the greatest concentration of snow removal effort to facilitate the dispatching of emergency response units and/or law enforcement personnel. During such storms, service to parking lots, sidewalks, and trails designated as Priority 2 will be delayed

Residents also have responsibilities for snow response as outlined in the municipal code. Section 6-2013(b) requires the owner or occupant of any property in the City to remove snow, sleet, hail, or ice from the sidewalks adjacent to that property within 24 hours of the storm ending.

**RESOURCES**

In addition to the Snow Plan, which is published on the City's website, there are additional resources available to residents. The Snow Trooper website (snowtrooper.c3gov.com) provides real-time data from snowplows for the public to view. It shows residents what priority each street is and allows them to track the progress of snow response throughout the City.

Residents also have access to the Snow Guardians program. This program provides free snow removal from residential sidewalks in front of the resident's home. It is a free service open to all residents, although residents must complete a new application prior to each storm.

**Staff Responsible (Department Head):** Larius Hassen

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