



BURLEIGH COUNTY HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

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Winter Roadway Operations Policy

Approved by the Burleigh County Commission
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OVERVIEW

With the advent of another winter season in the northern plains comes the possibility of snow, freezing rain and slippery roadways, and area resident's concern about access to work, school, recreation and other winter activities.

Burleigh County has adopted this policy to serve as a general guide for winter roadway operations and to inform roadway users of the process through which winter roadway situations will be addressed. The safety of county roadway users is the paramount concern of the Burleigh County Highway Department. Our goal is to operate county roadways in a reasonably safe condition and to provide such service in an effective and environmentally responsible manner.

Winter roadway conditions, and snow removal operations, in rural Burleigh County can be substantially different than what may be experienced in the city. In can be nice in town and just a few miles out the snow can be blowing, with zero visibility. Roadway users must be prepared for rapidly changing weather and roadway conditions. As with any driving situation, roadway users must exercise reasonable caution and drive with care. Driving at the posted speed limit may not be possible at all times.

It is important to note, **that Burleigh County cannot and does not assure a completely bare pavement.**

Anti-skid applications will be focused on intersections, hills, curves and other potentially problematic areas to assist with traction; however, these efforts do not relieve the motorist of the responsibility to use good judgment in using the county's roadways.

Burleigh County is responsible for the operation of nearly 1500 miles of county and township roadways, from major collector highways carrying over 5,000 vehicles per day to local access roadways carrying fewer than twenty, all spread out over 1668 square miles. In addition, the Highway Department provides roadway services to over 500 residential subdivisions.

In order to maximize the county's resources, the Highway Department's initial focus will be to provide for reasonable access to critical facilities, emergency services and trunk highways. Depending upon the severity and duration of the event, it may take several days to open all roadways.

After major events it can take, and has taken, up to a week to open all of the roadways in the county to regular traffic. Area residents need to be patient and prepared for these situations. Those that need to be in town for work or for medical reasons are encouraged to make arrangements to stay in town during extreme weather conditions.

Burleigh County does not have the operational resources to inspect all of the county's roadways for weather-related issues during, after or in anticipation of an impending winter weather event and may not have resources to correct all potentially hazardous conditions. Burleigh County will respond to reports of specific potential hazards and conditions, giving consideration to available resources and the apparent degree of the potential hazard in relation to others known or anticipated. The decision as to the allocation of resources will be within the discretion of the Burleigh County Engineer/Road Superintendent*, through coordination with and at the direction of the County Commission.

COORDINATION WITH SCHOOL DISTRICTS

Providing for the safe transportation of students to and from the county's schools is an objective shared by all, as is the responsibility. No single entity is alone responsible for ensuring that safety - it requires a partnership of the school districts, the county, the parents of students and other roadway users.

With the limited physical resources of the county, the multiple and extensive bus routes established by the school districts and the diverse elements of the county's roadway system, safe and effective wintertime school transportation requires a coordinated effort and a mutual commitment by all of the partners.

- The physical characteristics of certain roadway segments may preclude routine operation of school bus traffic. The Highway Department and the school districts should work together to identify these locations and develop reasonable alternatives.
- To facilitate timely and efficient dispatching of response vehicles, the Highway Department, during times of inclement or threatening weather, will provide for late night / early morning roadway inspection.
- The school districts and parents should identify secure locations and procedures for collection and delivery of students and should work with the Highway Department to establish a method of identification of those locations to alert response vehicle operators.

OPERATING PROCEDURES

1) DISPATCHING OF EQUIPMENT

The County will normally not typically dispatch snow removal equipment until after a snowfall event has ended or until approximately four (4) inches of snow has accumulated. During unusual situations where earlier deployment appears to be a more prudent use of county resources to meet certain, special, public needs, the Burleigh County Engineer/Road Superintendent* has the discretion to dispatch equipment contrary to standard policy or procedure.

Anti-skid materials may be used to provide for stopping and starting traction at intersections, hills, curves and other areas of concern. Anti-skid application equipment will be dispatched when roadway surface conditions may make travel for the **responsible roadway user** unusually problematic.

- If a snow and ice event develops during regular working hours (Monday - Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.), equipment may be dispatched at that time. If an event develops during the nighttime or early morning hours, equipment will usually be dispatched between 3:00 a.m. and 5:00 a.m.
- Response to weekend and holiday emergency events will be handled in a similar fashion. During extended emergency weather events, the Highway Department may operate on a twenty-four-hour schedule.
- The dispatch of response vehicles and personnel will be the responsibility of the County Engineer/Road Superintendent* working within the parameters of this and other policies. The County Engineer/Road Superintendent* has the discretion to consider special circumstances, prudent use of public resources and unusual public needs in making exceptions to this policy.
- Weather forecasts provided by the National Weather Service and other responsible reporting agencies will be considered when determining an appropriate response to snow and ice and other winter weather events.

2) OPERATING SEQUENCE

County Roads will typically be scheduled for response first. In certain, extraordinary, situations these efforts may need to be continuous. After these roadways have been cleared, remaining routes will be serviced.

3) ANTI-SKID APPLICATION

A clean, finely graded aggregate, containing a small amount of rock salt to prevent freezing, may be mechanically spread at intersections, curves, on hills and other potentially problematic areas, at the discretion of the equipment operator. This material is applied to assist the tractive effort of a vehicle and is not necessarily intended to melt ice or snow on the roadway.

4) PERSONAL PROPERTIES

A) Mail boxes or other personal property damaged during snow removal activity will be evaluated on a case by case basis. Only those receptacles that were **properly located and installed** in accordance with adopted design standards and which were damaged by actual physical contact with county equipment will be considered for repair at the county's expense.

B) Burleigh County residents are reminded that **IT IS AGAINST THE LAW** to deposit snow upon or across public roadways. Piles of snow left on or near the roadway can freeze into a solid mass, creating a hazardous situation for vehicles and snowplows. Collisions and damages caused by snow placed in the roadway may result in a substantial liability to the property owner(s).

C) Burleigh County operators may assist stranded motorists by contacting law enforcement or other emergency personnel. County employees will not attempt to remove or extract vehicles from ditches, snow banks or any other impediment. Residents are reminded to remove parked vehicles and other property from public roadways and rights-of-way to assist in snow removal.

D) Motorists are encouraged to ensure that their vehicles are appropriately maintained and equipped for winter-weather driving situations.

INFORMATION

Questions or concerns regarding Burleigh County Winter Roadway Operations may be directed to the Burleigh County Highway Department in Bismarck at (701) 204 - 7748. Local radio stations and other media should be monitored for information on roadway conditions and roadway emergency declarations.

* The Burleigh County Engineer, County Road Superintendent, or their designee.