

Winter Operations

Winter is fast approaching and that means many of us are turning our minds to snow. Last winter was one of the worst in the Halifax region in a decade. With more than 20 storms, some of them full-out blizzards, crews were kept busy keeping our streets and sidewalks clear of snow and ice so we were safe to travel.

Do you know that every time it snows, our municipal and contracted crews are responsible for clearing 3,800 lane kilometres of roads, 950 kilometres of sidewalks and walkways, and 3,600 bus stops across the municipality? That's a lot of ground to cover.

To ensure the best possible service, HRM has snow removal standards in place. Service standards require Priority 1 streets, which include main arteries, bus routes and streets leading to schools and public buildings to be cleared within 12 hours after the end of a snowfall. Priority 2 streets, which include residential roads, are required to be completed within 24 hours after the end of a snowfall. . If, however, after 36 hours your street has not been cleared of snow or ice, residents are asked to call 311 and file a service request. 311 is your direct connection to municipal services, and is the fastest and most effective way to report snow-related issues and have a crew dispatched to fix the problem.

Some amount of damage during snow clearing is to be expected, especially when there is a lot of snow on the ground, visibility is bad or in older neighbourhoods that have narrower sidewalks. I would encourage you to follow these simple steps – before the snow starts – to help protect your property and ensure clearing efforts go as safely and smoothly as possible.

- **Trim any tree branches and shrubs that originate from your property.** These can obstruct access and visibility for snow-clearing equipment.
- **Remove planters, lawn decorations and any other portable objects** near the sidewalk before the winter. Items like sports equipment that may still be used should be safely stored when bad weather is in the forecast.
- **Mark any permanent structures or objects too big to move with a reflector** that will be visible above the snow. This helps crews identify obstacles.
- **Secure off-street parking.** Vehicles that hang over or are parked on the sidewalk are prone to damage and become a dangerous obstacle for sidewalk crews. Those in violation can be ticketed.

As well, you have a responsibility to secure off-street parking during the winter months and seek information about when the overnight winter parking ban is enforced. Just like last season, the ban will be in effect from December 15 to March 31, and will be enforced only during declared snow and ice events, from 1 a.m. to 6 a.m.

The easiest way to stay informed is to sign up for notifications by filling out an online registration form at www.halifax.ca/snow/parkingban, email a request to contact@halifax.ca or call 311. If you signed up last season, then you do not need to register again.

Residents who subscribe will receive timely messages by phone, email, and/or text message, throughout the winter season, about the status of overnight winter parking bans in the Halifax region. The municipality also shares regular updates on the parking ban and other snow-related

information on its online snow page, www.halifax.ca/snow and via Twitter, at [@hfxgov](https://twitter.com/hfxgov). And of course, residents can always call 311 with questions or concerns.

Please remember that winter safety is a shared responsibility. By working together, we can ensure that we're all better prepared for whatever this winter may bring.