

POLICY # 032		POLICY TITLE: WINTER ROAD MAINTENANCE STANDARDS	
APPROVAL DATE AND MOTION:	July 16, 2024; 2024-07-30	CROSS-REFERENCE:	Transportation Master Plan; Policy # PD 014 General Municipal Servicing Standards (GMSS); Policy #SA008 – Work Alone Policy; Policy #PW015 – Snow Plow Flag
RESPONSIBILITY:	General Manager – Public Works Operations		
		APPENDICES:	
APPROVER:	Council	EFFECTIVE DATE:	July 16, 2024
REVISION DATE(s)/ MOTION #:		NEXT REVIEW DATE:	May 2025

1. DEFINITIONS

- 1.a. **County** means the municipality of the County of Vermilion River in the Province of Alberta.
- 1.b. **Council** means the seven (7) elected representatives of the County of Vermilion River in the Province of Alberta.
- 1.c. **Chief Administrative Officer** or **CAO** means the Chief Administrative Officer of the County of Vermilion River, or their designated representative.
- 1.d. **Emergency Event** means an urgent, sudden, and serious event or an unforeseen change in circumstances that necessitates immediate action to remedy harm or avert imminent danger to life, health, or property.



- 1.e. **General Manager - Public Works Operations** means the person employed by the County of Vermilion River in the position of General Manager – Public Works Operations either on a permanent or interim basis.
- 1.f. **Operations Manager** means the person employed by the County of Vermilion River in the position of Public Works Operations Manager either on a permanent or interim basis.
- 1.g. **Road Foreman** means the person(s) employed by the County of Vermilion River in the position of Public Works Road Foreman either on a permanent or interim basis.
- 1.h. **Hamlet** means the named Hamlets located within the boundaries of the County of Vermilion River that are a responsibility of the County; Blackfoot, Islay, Clonald, Rivercourse, Tulliby Lake, McLaughlin, Streamstown, and Dewberry.
- 1.i. **Subdivision** means the named Subdivisions located within the boundaries of the County of Vermilion River; Brennan Park, Clover View Acres, Country Air Estates, Creekside Estates, Deerfoot Estates, Denwood Acres, Grandview Estates, Hawkstone Estates, Horizonview Acres, Indian Lake Meadows, Lakeview Estates, Morning Gold Estates, Ravine View, Robinwood Acres, Sandpiper Estates, Silver Willow Estates, Willow Creek and any other subdivisions that may be created.
- 1.j. **Equipment** means any type of motorized machinery used for the purpose of snow clearing and winter road maintenance including but not limited to graders, snow plows, sanding trucks, loaders, skid steers, and light trucks either owned or contracted by the County of Vermilion River.
- 1.k. **Equipment Operator** means any person tasked to operate Equipment for the purpose of snow removal or winter road maintenance either employed or contracted by the County of Vermilion River.
- 1.l. **Extreme Winter Weather** means excessive freezing rain, heavy snow, blowing snow, strong winds, excessive wind chills, extreme cold ambient temperatures, and any other weather events that have the potential to create a life-threatening situation.
- 1.m. **On Call Person** means the person tasked to monitor weather and road conditions on a 24-hour basis by the County of Vermilion River.



- 1.n. **Frequency of Coverage** means how soon snow removal and winter road maintenance will be completed following a winter weather event.
- 1.o. **Grader Beat** means the area that an **Equipment Operator(s)** is assigned to for snow removal and winter road maintenance within the County of Vermilion River.
- 1.p. **Priority** means the right to take precedence or to proceed before others.
- 1.q. **A1, C1, C2, L1, L2** means the classification of roads as defined by the County of Vermilion River General Municipal Services Standard Policy.
- 1.r. **Bus Routes** means the roads travelled by busses to provide transportation of rural residents to school within the County of Vermilion River.

2. POLICY STATEMENT

- 2.a. The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for snow removal and road maintenance during winter conditions for all roadways under the control of the County of Vermilion River.

3. OBJECTIVE

- 3.a. To reduce the hazards related to winter driving conditions by providing reasonably safe driving surfaces for all road users.
- 3.b. To facilitate the operations of Emergency Services.
- 3.c. To meet the defined snow removal level of service using the labour and **equipment** allotted within the current year's budget by **Council** in a manner that is safe for both **County** employees and the public.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.a. Winter road maintenance and snow removal is done to improve public safety. Previously the objectives of this policy were achieved under other policies.
- 4.b. Policy PW 007 – Quality Standards for Snow Removal
 - 4.b.i. Policy PW 007 was rescinded on July 16, 2024, motion number 2024-07-28.
- 4.c. Policy PW 008 – Quality Standards for Winter Conditions
 - 4.c.i. Policy PW 008 was rescinded on July 16, 2024, motion number 2024-07-29.

5. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

5.a. General Winter Road Maintenance

- 5.a.i. The **County** will follow the road **priority** ranking as detailed below in section 5.b. for sanding, salting, plowing, and patrolling of road surfaces except in an **Emergency Event** situation as deemed by the **Operations Manager, General Manager - Public Works Operations**, or the **CAO**.
- 5.a.ii. When icy road conditions exist, winter sand will be placed when and where it is deemed necessary to provide a reasonably safe driving surface at the discretion of the **Equipment Operator, Road Foreman, Operations Manager**, or the **General Manager - Public Works Operations**.
- 5.a.iii. Winter sand shall be mixed in the most effective ratio of sand to salt or as conditions warrant.
- 5.a.iv. The **County** acknowledges that employees may perform hazardous duties working alone and that employees may perform duties outside of normal working hours. Policy #SA008 Work Alone Policy/Directive applies to **Equipment Operators** performing winter road maintenance and snow removal. Outside of normal working hours (1700 hrs – 0600hrs) all **Equipment Operators** shall carry a cellular telephone or two-way radio, notify a contact person of their approximate location and route, and upon completion of their duties notify their contact person again.
- 5.a.v. The **County** acknowledges that unpredictable winter weather creates hazardous conditions, and that as the employer we are obligated to protect our employees from potential hazards, and that our employees also have an obligation to protect themselves. In accordance with Policy #SA008 Work Alone Policy/Directive all employees have the responsibility of bringing suitable clothing and emergency supplies with them while working alone during extreme cold or inclement weather conditions.
- 5.a.vi. In the event of **Extreme Winter Weather** to ensure the safety of **County** employees:
 - 5.a.vi.a The buddy system will be utilized whereby **Equipment Operators** work in teams of two maintaining close proximity to each other in order to provide immediate assistance if required.
 - 5.a.vi.b. The **General Manager - Public Works Operations** or the **CAO**, at their sole discretion, may cease work

operations for all **Equipment Operators** unless an **Emergency Event** situation has been deemed by the **Operations Manager, General Manager - Public Works Operations**, or the **CAO**. Situations such as but not limited to:

- 5.a.vi.b.i. When temperatures fall below negative 30 (-30) degrees Celsius before the wind chill, and or negative forty (-40) degrees Celsius with the wind chill.
- 5.a.vi.b.ii. When visibility is severely hindered.
- 5.a.vii. Snow clearing will commence no later than 6:00am following a snow event unless notified by the On Call Person when:
 - 5.a.vii.a. Snow fall reaches 1.50 – 3.00 centimeters on paved surfaces.
 - 5.a.vii.b. Snow fall reaches 5.00 – 7.50 centimeters on gravel roads.
 - 5.a.vii.c. Conditions, such as excessive drifting, warrant.
- 5.a.viii. Within Hamlets, Equipment will plow snow around any vehicles parked along Hamlet streets. It will be the vehicle owner's responsibility for snow removal around the vehicle.
- 5.a.ix. Within Hamlets, Equipment Operators will minimize windrows to allow reasonable safe access to entrances, driveways, and sidewalks.
- 5.b. Road **Priority** Ranking Level of Service
 - 5.b.i. Within the respective **Grader Beats**, winter road maintenance and snow removal will be prioritized as follows with all surfaces being cleared to full width using the assigned **Equipment Operators, Equipment** and materials suited to the conditions:
 - 5.b.i.a. First **Priority**: Class **A1** and **C1** paved roads (may include **Bus Routes**) shall be given First **Priority**. First **Priority** roads shall be maintained as bare as possible on all paved surfaces.
 - 5.b.i.b. Second **Priority**: Class **C2**, **L1**, and **L2** gravel roads that are **Bus Routes** shall be given Second **Priority**.
 - 5.b.i.c. Third **Priority**: Class **L1**, and **L2** gravel roads that are not **Bus Routes** shall be given Third **Priority**.



- 5.b.i.d. Fourth **Priority**: Yards where a snow plow flag has been purchased in accordance with Policy #PW015 Snow Plow Flag shall be given fourth **priority**.
- 5.b.i.e. Yards where no snow plow flag has been purchased will not be plowed.
- 5.b.ii. The roads in **subdivisions** are classed into the same categories as all other **County** roads, and therefore will be subject to the Road **Priority** Ranking assigned to the applicable road class.
- 5.b.iii. The road **priority** ranking for roads, **Hamlets**, and **Subdivisions** may vary depending on the availability of **equipment**, **equipment operators**, the total snow accumulation, and the severity of the weather event.
- 5.c. **Frequency of Coverage** Level of Service
 - 5.c.i. Within the respective **Grader Beats**, the **Frequency of Coverage** for winter road maintenance and snow removal will be as follows:
 - 5.c.i.a. First **Priority** roads as defined in 5.b.i.a. shall average 24 hours after a weather event.
 - 5.c.i.b. Second **Priority** roads as defined in 5.b.i.b. shall average 72 hours after a weather event.
 - 5.c.i.c. Third **Priority** roads as defined in 5.b.i.c. shall average 72 hours after a weather event.
 - 5.a.i.d. There is no specified **Frequency of Coverage** for Fourth **Priority** yards defined in 5.b.i.d.
 - 5.c.ii. Within **Hamlets** the **Frequency of Coverage** shall average 48 hours after a weather event.
 - 5.c.iii. The roads in **Subdivisions** are classed into the same categories as all other **County** roads, and therefore will be subject to the **Frequency of Coverage** assigned to the applicable road class.
 - 5.c.iv. **Frequency of Coverage** for roads, **Hamlets**, **Subdivisions**, and yards may vary depending on the severity of the weather event.
 - 5.c.v. The **Frequency of Coverage** timeline restarts with each weather event that occurs, regardless of all road **priority** ranks being cleared from the previous event.

6. ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

ROLE/TASK	TITLE(S) OF PERSON RESPONSIBLE
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HANDLING INQUIRIES	General Manager – Public Works Operations or Designate
MONITORING REVIEWS AND REVISIONS	General Manager – Public Works Operations
IMPLEMENTING POLICY	Council
COMMUNICATING POLICY	Chief Administrative Officer
INTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS	Administration; Council
EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS	Property Owners

7. EXCEPTIONS

7.a. There are no exceptions to this policy.

8. POLICY EVALUATION

8.a. The evaluation will include the following:

- 8.a.i. That the **County** will engage in a Policy Evaluation every year to monitor the effectiveness of the policy and review opportunities for improvement.
- 8.a.ii. Needs assessment if required.
- 8.a.iii. Process evaluation to measure whether the policy is meeting its intended objective; and
- 8.a.iv. Outcome evaluation to determine whether the policy has met its objectives and whether additional opportunities for improvement in the policy can be identified.