

SNOW AND ICE

Frequently Asked Questions

- **Why can't you plow my street now?**
- We wish we had enough snowplows and drivers to take care of every street right away, but our resources are limited and so we must adhere to a carefully laid out system for clearing the streets. If we allowed our plows to be diverted each time a special request was made, our system would be destroyed and it would take far longer to get all the streets in the municipality cleared. To keep our snow removal operations as effective and efficient as possible, plows are not permitted to deviate from their assigned routes. Highways and arterial streets have first priority for snow plowing, and then collectors and then the remainder of the streets are then plowed.
- **Can you tell me exactly when my street will be plowed?**
- Under ideal circumstances, we can predict fairly accurately when we will have streets in various sections of Mt. Lebanon plowed. As weather conditions change we often must alter our snow-fighting strategy in the midst of the snow removal operations in order to control drifting snow, ice or other special problems. We cannot give you an estimate of when your street will be cleared due to ever-changing weather conditions.
- **Why don't the trucks plow and salt on the way to their routes?**
- Each snowplow has an assigned route. If the trucks spread salt on their way to their destination, then they wouldn't have enough to spread along their own route. Plowing along the way would mean it would be just that much longer until the truck reached its assigned route.
- **Why don't you use the big trucks to plow out cul-de-sacs?**
- The varying sizes of cul-de-sacs present plowing problems ranging from difficult to impossible. A plow can easily cut an 11-foot path through the snow on a straight road surface, but trying to plow and turn the blade in a small circle in a cul-de-sac is very difficult.
- **I'm having a party tonight. Can you be sure to plow in front of my house before my guests start arriving?**
- We wish we could comply with all requests, but equipment and manpower limitations do not permit us to deviate from our predetermined snow plowing system.
- **Why do you sometimes salt instead of plow, or plow instead of salt?**
- Different types of storms require the use of different snow-fighting techniques. The decision whether to salt or plow depends upon the expected weather conditions. For example, if the temperature is below 18 degrees and not

expected to rise, salt will not be effective. But if the sun is shining and the temperature is 20 degrees or more and expected to remain steady or to rise, then salt would be more effective. The decision whether to plow or salt is made with great consideration and based on the latest weather information available. Plowing under the wrong conditions can create a polished street surface, resulting in dangerous glare ice. The decisions made by an experienced crew and supervisory personnel are critical.

- **I once saw a snow plow parked in a restaurant parking lot during a bad snowstorm. Why was it there instead of on the streets working?**
- Snow plow operators take pride in clearing the streets on their routes as quickly and thoroughly as possible. Driving a snowplow is demanding, tiring work. Common sense and good safety practices dictate that each driver should take a 30-minute break every six hours. It is dangerous, both for the snowplow driver and the public, if a fatigued driver is behind the wheel of a snowplow. It is in the best interest of the all concerned for the drivers to take occasional breaks.
- **Why do snow plow trucks sometimes just ride around when it's not snowing?**
- There are three reasons why you might see plows on the streets on snowless days. One is that every driver undergoes pre-season training. Skills must be sharpened and routes need to be learned and relearned. The second reason is that the trucks may be scanning for secondary cleaning (cleaning the streets where vehicles were parked during the plowing of the streets). The third reason is that the trucks can be salting ice condition areas that are out of their view, or other problem areas.
- **When I called the Public Works number to find out about road conditions, the line was busy.**
- Our telephone lines are understandably jammed during severe weather conditions. We advise limiting your travel, or staying off the roads entirely if possible. Listen to television and radio bulletins about road conditions and check in with social media sites such as Twitter or apps such as Waze or Google Maps. Remember that we can only provide information about streets within the municipal limits. Our phone lines should be used primarily to alert us if a street has been missed or if there is some special problem relating to the snow removal operations. If you need to contact our department, please call 412-343-3403 or 911 if the issue is an emergency.