



# Commissioners' Agenda Action Sheet

**Meeting Date:** June 10, 2025  
**Subject:** Policy for Snow and Ice Control Operations in Benton County ~ M Rasmussen, Deputy County Administrator/County Engineer  
**Presenter:** Matt Rasmussen, Deputy County Administrator/County Engineer  
**Prepared By:** Matt Mahoney  
**Reviewed By:** Matt Rasmussen, Deputy County Administrator/County Engineer, and Clayton Rawlings, Public Works Manager.  
**PA Review:** **Approved:** No      **Denied:** No      **N/A:** Yes  
*(If denied, include reasoning)*

**Type of Agenda Item:** Scheduled Business

**Summary / Background Information**

Pursuant to WAC 136-50-050, the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) shall develop and by resolution or ordinance adopt written policies, within the limits of existing state law, that cover any matters relating to county road department administration, maintenance, and construction as they may see fit.

A County policy for snow and ice control operations is necessary for the establishment of an accepted level of service that is effective, efficient and economical.

Should the Board adopt this policy for snow and ice control operations, all previous policies shall be repealed and replaced.

**Fiscal Impact**

The policy will establish an accepted level of service that is effective, efficient and economical. All costs associated with the implementation of this policy and execution of snow and ice control operations are included in the approved County Road Fund biennial budget for 2025 – 2026.

**Recommendation**

Staff recommends the Board adopt the Policy for Snow and Ice Control Operations in Benton County.

**Suggested Motion**

I hereby move that the Board of Benton County Commissioners approve and adopt the Policy for Snow and Ice Control Operations in Benton County and that all previous policies for snow and ice control operations are hereby repealed and replaced.

**Signatures Required on Agreements/Contracts**

Resolution Only

## RESOLUTION 2025-340

**BEFORE THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF BENTON COUNTY, WASHINGTON:**

**IN THE MATTER OF A POLICY FOR SNOW AND ICE CONTROL OPERATIONS IN BENTON COUNTY**

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to WAC 136-50-050 the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) shall develop and by resolution or ordinance adopt written policies, within the limits of existing state law, that cover any matters relating to county road department administration, maintenance, and construction as they may see fit; and

**WHEREAS**, a county policy for snow and ice control operations is necessary for the establishment of an accepted level of service that is effective, efficient and economical; **NOW, THEREFORE**,

**BE IT RESOLVED** that the Board of Benton County Commissioners hereby approves of and adopts the attached Policy for Snow and Ice Control Operations: and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that all previous policies for snow and ice control operations are hereby repealed and replaced.

**DATED** this 10<sup>th</sup> day of June, 2025.

Attest:

DocuSigned by:  
*Amanda Pearson*  
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Clerk of the Board

DocuSigned by:  
*Jerome Delvin*  
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Chairman

DocuSigned by:  
*Michael Alvarez*  
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Chairman Pro Tem

DocuSigned by:  
*Will McKay*  
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Commissioner

Constituting the Board of County Commissioners  
Benton County, Washington



**BENTON COUNTY  
SNOW AND ICE CONTROL  
OPERATIONS POLICY**

**June 2025**

## **POLICY:**

### **I. Purpose**

This policy establishes an acceptable level of service and provides the basis for the Public Works Department to establish responsibilities and procedures to carry out its snow ice control operations in an effective, efficient and economical manner.

### **II. Scope**

This policy pertains to all staff involved in County Roads snow and ice control operations including managers, supervisors, administrative staff, road maintenance personnel and vehicle maintenance personnel.

### **III. Policy**

#### **A. General**

Snow and ice control operations is the County's number one maintenance priority during the winter months. Typical hours of operation for snow and ice control are from the hours of 4:00 AM to 9:00 PM, allowing a focus on the morning and evening commuter travel times. Local access roads will be addressed only during normal working hours unless circumstances require Public Works Department staff to evaluate.

Due to the nature of winter weather conditions, it is an unrealistic expectation to have a roadway completely and immediately clear from snow or ice. Benton County's goal is to maintain roads in a passable driving condition for vehicles that are properly equipped for winter driving conditions. Motorists are expected to modify their driving practices in accordance with road conditions. More information on winter driving can be found at the Washington State Patrol website; [www.wsp.wa.gov](http://www.wsp.wa.gov) or the Washington State Department of Transportation website; <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov>.

Due to our geography, Benton County can have several "micro-climates" during winter events, so localized conditions can vary drastically from one area to another.

The public Works Department may utilize the following in the County's snow and ice control operations:

- Plowing
- Sanding
- Anti-Icing and Deicing - Liquid
- Salting and Deicing - Solid

#### **B. Responsibility**

The County Engineer, or their designee, shall be responsible for the management and supervision of snow and ice control operations.

The decision to call out any Public Works Department staff for snow and ice control operations outside of regular work schedules (i.e. after hours, weekends, holidays, etc.), shall be made by the Public Works Director, County Engineer, or their designee. Snow and ice control operations that may require employees to work outside of their regularly scheduled work hours/day may include the following:

- Freezing rain or freezing fog
- Black ice
- Compacted snow or ice on the roadway
- Drifting snow

Employees will not typically be called in to work, outside of their regular work schedules, while it is actively snowing unless the snow has reached a depth of two (2) inches and is expected to continue accumulating.

#### **C. Winter Driving Season**

Unless weather conditions require otherwise the winter driving season is assumed to be between October 15<sup>th</sup> and April 15<sup>th</sup>. All road and vehicle maintenance personnel will be prepared for snow and ice control operations on or before the beginning of the winter driving season unless weather conditions require otherwise.

#### **D. Precedence of Work**

Snow and ice control work will have top priority for the Public Works Department during periods of inclement weather and will take precedence over all other normal maintenance activities. Only the Public Works Director, County Engineer, Public Works Manager, or their designee may decide that other health and safety issues take priority over snow and ice control operations.

#### **E. Prioritizing Work**

The Road Department does not possess the resources to control snow and ice equally on all roadways at the same time. As such, the County Engineer, Public Works Manager, or their designee, will select the actual sequence of roads for efficient treatment in the following order:

- Priority Level 1 – Arterial roads, collector roads and other roads that are critical for the movement of people and goods and requested emergency routes that are responding to emergency calls.
- Priority Level 2 – School bus and public transportation routes that are not Priority Level 1 roads.
- Priority Level 3 – Secondary roads with residences or businesses.
- Priority Level 4 – All other roads.

The county's level of service will be a plowed and/or treated lane of travel in each direction. Once this level of service has been met, lower priority level roads will be addressed.

Certain roads throughout the county that are not needed for movement of people and goods through the winter driving season may be designated by the County Engineer to be closed for the season. The list of any roads to be closed for the winter driving season shall be approved annually by the Board of County Commissioners.

**F. Complaints and Requests for Maintenance**

The office of the County Engineer will be the snow and ice control headquarters. During normal working hours all complaints and requests for maintenance will be routed through the Public Works Department's administration staff.

**G. Other Issues and Damage**

Mailboxes – Benton County Public Works Department will repair or replace only those mailboxes damaged due to direct contact with county equipment. Any replacement of mailboxes will consist of a generic, standard size metal mailbox mounted on a 4"x4" wooden post. Property owners who have an ornamental, decorative or non-standard mailbox in the county road right-of-way/easement do so at their own risk.

Driveways - Benton County Public Works Department assumes no responsibility for the removal of snow deposited in driveways because of snow plowing. It is not practical to change the plow blade angle to avoid driveways. A snow berm may be deposited both during the initial plowing phase, and again during widening and mop up operations. Exact times cannot be provided on when individual roads will be plowed.

Turf/Landscaping - Landscaping and lawns, including but not limited to, shrubs, trees, inanimate objects, etc. installed by a property owner within the county road right-of-way/easement will be the responsibility of the owner and the owner assumes all risk of damage to such items. Furthermore, the County cannot reasonably control the drift or discharge of snow and/or shoulder materials from the snowplow into ditches and lawns. The County will not be responsible for the removal/repair of any shrubs, yard ornamentation, and turf or landscaping, should materials inadvertently cast into adjacent lawn areas by the plow.

Stranded/Blocking Vehicles - Employees will try to assist the occupants of a stalled or stranded vehicle by contacting County dispatch services. County equipment should not be used to push or pull a privately owned vehicle unless specifically authorized by the Public Works Director, County Engineer, or Public Works Manager.