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“Never too early to plan for snowfall”



City of Norfolk equipment mechanic Scott Smith checks out the steering column of a City of Norfolk truck that will soon be equipped with a snowplow mounted on the front.

Even though it's been a very pleasant fall, it's never too early to think about snow and snow emergencies. It was only nine months ago that a foot of snow and over 40 mile-per-hour wind shut Norfolk down for a few days.

Jim Dooley, Operations Manager for the City of Norfolk, reminds residents that they need to know what to do if a snow emergency is called. “Even Stephen, the Snow plow” is the phrase to remember in a snow emergency as citizens have to park their vehicles on the even side of the street and not at all along emergency routes.

“Our goal after it snows is to first clear the Emergency Snow Routes to allow for emergency vehicle access to within three blocks of every home in the City. Snow plows can't do an adequate of moving the snow unless the vehicles are all on the even side of the street. Remember not to park along the 16 miles of emergency snow routes so check our website to make sure you know where those are at,” Dooley said. The City's street website is <http://www.norfolkne.gov/street>.

Snow plows aren't called out to start moving snow unless at least two inches of snow or more has fallen.

Snow operations start when it stops snowing and the wind dies down. Dooley said, ideally, the City's 13 snow plows will start moving snow at about 2:00 am so streets are cleared when most people head to work.

"There are ten areas of the City that are divided into up to three sections. We start moving the snow in the downtown business district and the snow emergency routes. We then rotate which section in the ten residential areas is plowed first so no one section is cleared first after every snow," Dooley said. Those sections and rotations can also be found on the City's website.

When City officials make the decision to call a snow emergency, notification will go out to the public over the radio, TV, Twitter (@NorfolkNE), Facebook (NorfolkNE), newspaper, City e-mails and text alerts (sign up for both at <http://www.norfolkne.gov>).

Residents can also call the Snow Number 402-844-2299 to see if a snow emergency is in effect. Dooley said it may be a good idea if leaving town for a couple days over the winter months to park any vehicle left behind on the even side of the street to avoid a \$50 fine and possible towing. City ordinance states that fines for parking in a restricted area during a snow emergency are \$50. State law provides for all fines that the City collects to go to the Norfolk Public School District.

Altogether the City has 144 miles of streets and 20 miles of alleys to clear. Deicing operations will be concentrated on the City's main arterial routes. New concrete can't be salted so the following streets will not be deiced this winter: 13th Street and Pasewalk Avenue; 1st Street and Madison Avenue; west bound lane of Madison Avenue from 1st Street to 7th Street.