



WHAT BUSINESSES NEED TO KNOW

Snow Clearing in Victoria

Victoria may be a “City of Gardens”, but we can still get our share of snow. Snow and ice clearing is a big job, and unfortunately City trucks, equipment, and crews can’t make it everywhere at once. We need to work together as a community to keep streets and sidewalks clear and safe, and keep people, goods, and services moving. Everyone has a role to play when it snows.

What is considered to be a business?

Businesses can include retail stores, institutions, schools, shopping malls, as well as condominiums, apartment buildings and townhouses.

What is the role of businesses when it snows?

The City’s *Streets and Traffic Bylaw* requires an owner or occupier of land remove snow and ice from a sidewalk fronting their property by 10 a.m. each day.

Environmentally friendly “ice melt” products can be used to remove ice and snow. Products that are corrosive and include a skull and crossbone on the label, are not acceptable as they can harm the environment and concrete sidewalks.

What is the penalty for not clearing snow and ice?

Businesses that do not comply with the Bylaw may face a fine of \$125 per ticketed offence (per day). A ticket can be issued up to six months after an offence has occurred.

Business owners are encouraged to make arrangements in advance with their neighbours to clear each other’s frontages in the event they can’t make it into work.

What if my business is closed when it snows?

Businesses that are closed during the fall and winter months or when it snows, are still responsible for making sure snow and ice are cleared from sidewalks fronting their property by 10 a.m. each day.

How does the City of Victoria prioritize its snow and ice response?

The City has a *Severe Weather Response Plan* to guide ice and snow removal operations in Victoria. To ensure emergency services and main arteries are maintained, the City prioritizes its snow clearing efforts based on the following priorities:

First Priority

roadways: emergency routes, major, arterial streets, hills, bridge decks, and access routes to hospitals, fire stations and police headquarters

sidewalks/frontages: downtown transit stops and curb ramps, and sidewalks fronting City properties downtown

Second Priority

roadways: senior care and homeless shelter facility streets; secondary and collector roads, left turn lanes with traffic loop detectors

sidewalks/frontages: transit stops and sidewalks fronting City properties outside of downtown; and community centre frontages

Third Priority

roadways: residential roads, bicycle lanes, City-owned surface parking lots, downtown parking spaces

sidewalks/frontages: Galloping Goose Trail and Westsong Walkway

continued

Why doesn't the City clear all of Victoria's sidewalks?

With over 450 km of sidewalks in Victoria, it would be too costly for City taxpayers to take on the entire task of removing ice and snow.

Who is responsible for clearing snow and ice from bus stops?

City crews will remove snow and ice from all downtown transit stops as they are a First Priority. Bus stops located outside of downtown will be cleared by City crews as a Second Priority.

Who is responsible for clearing curb ramps?

The clearing of ice and snow from downtown curb ramps is a First Priority for City crews. Curb ramps located outside of downtown are to be cleared by the fronting business or residence.

What area does Victoria's "downtown" cover?

Victoria's downtown is in the general shape of a rectangle, and is currently bordered by Chatham and Caledonia Streets, Belleville and Blanshard Streets, and Victoria's waterfront along Store and Wharf Streets. (SEE MAP)

How long does it take for City crews to complete Priority roadways and sidewalk/frontages?

Priority roadways and sidewalks/frontages may be completed up to 72 hours after a snowfall, provided that the snow stops falling.

If crews are in the process of clearing Second Priority routes and it starts snowing again, they will immediately return to clearing First Priority areas. In the event of a severe snow storm, it could take up to seven days or more for crews to complete Third Priority areas.

What is the best way for the public to get around when it snows?

When it snows, the public is asked to leave their cars at home and take transit or walk to where they need to go. (Note: Seniors and people with disabilities are advised to exercise caution outdoors.)

Will on-street parking be available after a snowfall?

On-street parking spaces may not be accessible immediately after a snowfall as City crews need to temporarily store snow in parking bays. This snow will be removed once all Third Priority areas have been cleared. The public is asked to park at parkades and parking lots in the event of snow.

Will bicycle racks be available for cyclists after a snowfall?

Crews clearing sidewalks in front of City buildings will make bicycle racks available. Businesses are encouraged to do the same when clearing their frontage.

What equipment does the City have to remove snow and ice?

The City of Victoria has six trucks with salters/ploughs as well as a number of backhoes, bobcats, snowblowers, small sidewalk ploughs, a front end loader, and one brine spreading anti-icing truck for pre-treating Victoria roads.

How does the City prepare for snow?

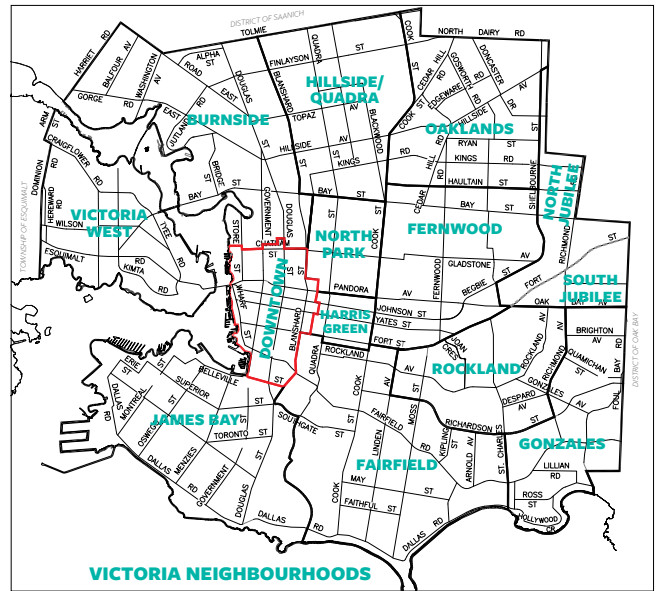
City staff monitor several weather forecast and tracking sites as well as pavement temperature sensors when snow or ice is predicted. Prior to a storm, the City's anti-icing truck is sent out to apply a layer of "brine" (salt and water) on major Victoria roads, including hills and bridges.

When the snow starts falling, City trucks begin de-icing and ploughing, and sidewalk crews start to clear First Priority routes.

Crews also conduct 24-hour patrols during a storm to continuously check road and sidewalk conditions.

Are the City's ice and snow removal practices "green"?

In 2008, the City began using an environmentally sensitive brine solution to pre-treat roads prior to a snowfall. This practice sped up the melting process, resulting in cost savings and less salt on Victoria roads.



Snow Preparation Tips

There are simple things businesses can do to prepare for snow:

- Make sure you and your staff have the necessary clothing and tools in advance for removing ice and snow, and only use environmentally sensitive products.
- Remove compacted snow and ice from your sidewalk by 10 a.m. daily to make walking safer for pedestrians and customers. Snow shovelling is demanding on the body, so be careful not to over do it.
- Place snow on the boulevard where possible and make sure to keep fire hydrants and bike racks visible and accessible.
- Don't place snow and ice from sidewalks, driveways, and parking lots into roadways or onto your neighbours' sidewalk or parking lot as this creates a hazard for motorists and pedestrians.
- Place snow on the right side of a driveway (when facing a street) to help prevent snow ploughs from moving snow back into a driveway entrance.
- Help your neighbours if they are unable to clear ice and snow from their sidewalk.
- Know the location of catch basins on your street and keep them clear of snow and ice to help prevent flooding when warmer temperatures and rain return.
- Leave your vehicle at home and encourage staff and customers to use public transit or walk.
- If you must drive in the snow, check current road conditions and weather; plan your route and leave lots of time; dress for the weather; take a shovel and sand; and bring someone with you to assist should you get stuck in snow.
- Ensure you have the basic supplies and contact information for your business to cope for a minimum of three days in the event of an emergency such as a heavy snowfall or power outage. For more information, visit: VictoriaReady.ca or call 250.920.3373.
- Post this fact sheet in your workplace for staff to refer to.

Where can I find more information on snow clearing?

For helpful information on snow clearing in Victoria, visit: victoria.ca/snowclearing

If you have a question, comment or suggestion, please call Public Works at 250.385.5711.

Please allow us 72 hours to respond, or longer in the event of a severe snow storm.