



Select Board

Department of Public Works

Snow Policy

I. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to explain and outline the snow removal rules and regulations of the Town of Groton and the Town of Groton Department of Public Works. It is the Town of Groton's intention to provide its residents and visitors with clear and concise rules and regulations.

II. POLICY

A. **Strategy:** The Town of Groton Department of Public Works has over 110 miles of roads to maintain. In an effort to make the snow season as safe as possible, the following rules and regulations are offered. Please note that each storm is different, so a particular strategy must be adjusted to achieve the best results.

B. **Plowing Protocol:** The Department of Public Work's employees will plow around the clock if necessary, to keep the roadways open and passable. Please be advised that Boston Road (Route 119) is maintained by Mass Highway from Old Ayer Road to the East and Elm Street to the West. Please understand that residents should not be concerned if they do not see their roadway plowed during the early part of a snowstorm. The Public Works Department follows an assigned route plan where main roads and hills are plowed first. All roads will be plowed according to this protocol.

When a snowstorm begins the Department responds by treating all roads with de-icing chemicals. Treating the road surfaces serves two purposes - preventing snow and ice from bonding to the surface and to keep traffic flowing. During certain storms, such as Ice Storms, multiple rounds of deicing chemicals may be applied during the event. The initial treating the roads takes approximately 2½ – 3 hours. Please remember that our crews have to travel on snow covered, slippery untreated roads to get here at any hour of the day or night. Please be patient as the crews will be out as soon as possible to begin snow removal operations.

C. **Storm Operations:** Plowing operations begin when there is an accumulation of **2 to 4 inches of snow** on road surfaces. Depending upon the severity of the storm, Town forces are assisted by hired contractors to expedite the process of snow removal. Each vehicle is assigned to a pre-determined route and will remain there until the storm subsides, unless an emergency occurs that requires reassignment of equipment from one location to another. The main objective is to keep all roads passable during the storm. Unfortunately, it is not possible to keep the roads free of snow without filling in many driveways; therefore,

when a resident cleans the end of a driveway, deposit the excess snow to the downstream side of the driveway. This will minimize the redeposit of snow into the cleared opening when the plow makes its next pass. Please do not shovel, plow or blow snow or ice into the roadway. The Town Bylaws prohibits this practice and allows the Town to levy fines against the offender. Residents are responsible for private contractors who plow individual driveways and push snow into the right-of-way.

After plowing is completed, roads are given a final treatment of deicing chemical. In the days following a storm, scraping and treating of roads continues depending upon weather forecasts. If snow is expected right away, the Department may not treat flat or minor streets if it is going to snow again that night. If colder weather is forecasted streets must be scraped of snow and slush to prevent icing of the surface when the temperature drops. At times right after the storm, the Department will be out again to widen the road edge so that drainage structures are exposed if the temperatures rise and melting occurs. As time allows, snow is removed from intersections and some areas of the center of Town where sight distance and parking is a concern.

D. Winter Parking Ban: Residents are reminded that a winter parking ban is in effect from November 15th until April 15th. On-street parking is prohibited overnight. Vehicles that are illegally parked will be ticketed.

E. Recycling and Trash Containers: Please ensure that the curbside pickup of recyclables or trash containers do not interfere with snow removal efforts.

F. Fire Hydrants: Fire hydrants are under the control of the Groton Water Department. The Water Department requests that residents with hydrants in front of or near their property to please clear the snow away from the area so that in an emergency the hydrant will be accessible. Questions regarding snow removal near hydrants should be directed to the Groton Water Department at (978) 448-1122.

G. Sand and Salt: A mixture of sand and salt is available to residents (no contractors) at three designated locations: 1) At the Highway Garage on Cow Pond Brook Road. 2) Next to the Light Department on Station Avenue. 3) Behind the Groton DPW annex building in West Groton on West Main Street.

H. Town Right-of-Way: Homeowners should be aware that in most instances they do not own the land up to the edge of road pavement or sidewalk. The Town generally owns the land from the edge of roadway up to 15 feet back depending on the particular road. There may be underground utilities within these areas and homeowners should be careful as to what they place in these areas. Trees, shrubbery, fences, lawn sprinkler systems or gardens within the right-of-way may be damaged during snow removal operations. The Town will not be responsible for damage to such items within the right-of-way.

I. Spring Repairs: Sometimes the grass strips along the roads are damaged while plowing. The Department of Public Works endeavors to repair these areas as soon as possible. It may take until mid-summer to repair these areas. The repair of grass surfaces generally consists of raking out the ruts and seeding with a standard highway grass seed.

J. Mailboxes: Listed below is the Town of Groton’s Mailbox Policy. By following this policy, residents will minimize damage to their mailbox from snow and ice removal.

TOWN OF GROTON MAILBOX AND NEWSPAPER DELIVERY BOX RIGHT-OF-WAY/INSTALLATION POLICY

No mailbox or newspaper delivery box (hereafter referred to as mailbox) will be allowed to exist on the Town of Groton’s right-of-way if it interferes with the safety of the traveling public or the function, maintenance, or operation of the highway system. A mailbox installation that does not conform to the provisions of the regulation is an unauthorized encroachment under Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 86, §3.

A mailbox installation that conforms to the following criteria will be considered acceptable unless in the judgment of the Director of Public Works, the installation interferes with snow removal, the safety of the traveling public or the function, maintenance, or operation of the highway system.

LOCATION:

1. No mailbox will be permitted where access is otherwise prohibited by law or regulation.
2. Mailboxes shall be located on the right-hand side of the roadway in the direction of the delivery route. The bottom of the box shall be set at an elevation established by the U.S. Postal Service, usually between 3’6” and 4’0” above the roadway surface. The roadside face of the box shall be offset from the edge of the traveled way or top edge of curb a minimum distance of 6 to 12 inches, or the width of a gravel shoulder.
3. When a mailbox is located at a driveway entrance, it shall be placed on the far side of the driveway in the direction of the delivery route.
4. When a mailbox is located at an intersecting road, it shall be located a minimum of 75 to 100 feet beyond the center of the intersecting road in the direction of the delivery route.

STRUCTURE:

1. Mailboxes shall be of light sheet metal or stronger construction conforming to the requirements of the U.S. Postal Service. Newspaper delivery boxes shall be of light sheet metal or plastic construction of minimum dimensions suitable for holding newspaper.
2. Mailbox supports shall not be set in concrete buckets unless the support design has been shown to be safe by crash tests when so installed.

SHOULDER AND PARKING AREA CONSTRUCTION:

1. It will be the responsibility of the postal patron to maintain the shoulder adequately to permit all-weather vehicular access to the mailbox and postal patron is responsible for snow removal for access to mailbox.

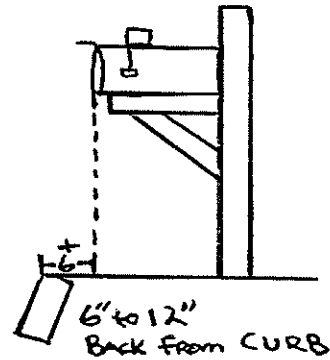
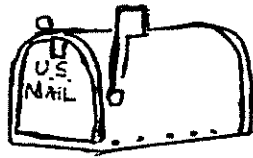
REMOVAL OF NONCONFORMING OR UNSAFE MAILBOXES:

1. Any mailbox that is found to violate the intent of this regulation shall be removed by the postal patron upon notification by the Town. At the discretion of the Town, based on an assessment of hazard to

the public, the patron will be granted not less than 24 hours or more than 30 days to remove an unacceptable mailbox.

MAILBOX REPLACEMENT IF DAMAGED BY SNOW REMOVAL:

1. The Town does not replace plastic mailboxes. Plastic mailboxes in cold weather may become very brittle and are not suitable in our type of climate.
2. The Town does not replace granite mailboxes.
3. The Town does not replace mailboxes that are in need of repair due to lack of maintenance or vandalism.
4. The Town does not replace mailboxes if the front of the box extends past the curb line and is not at least 6 to 12 inches back from the curb line.
5. The Town will only replace mailboxes if the Town's plow came in contact with a well-maintained mailbox or post.
6. Mailboxes to be fixed will be put on a list and repaired when the Highway Department is back on a regular schedule and all weather-related priorities are completed.
7. The Town does not replace mailboxes that have rotten posts or spike type supports.
8. Mailboxes will only be replaced with standard steel mailboxes.
9. Posts will only be replaced with pressure treated wooden posts, as shown below:



Policy Revised: January 7, 2019