



CITY OF VAUGHAN

CORPORATE POLICY

POLICY TITLE: WINTER MAINTENANCE SIGNIFICANT WEATHER EVENT
DECLARATION

POLICY NO.: N/A

Section:	Roads, Traffic & Operations		
Effective Date:	Click or tap to enter a date.	Date of Last Review:	Click or tap to enter a date.
Approval Authority: Administration		Policy Owner: DCM, Public Works	

POLICY STATEMENT

Winter maintenance across the City of Vaughan (the “City”) is a critical service with respect to ensuring public safety. The City’s winter maintenance program is designed to meet the standards prescribed in Provincial regulations.

Amendments to *Ontario Regulation 239/02, Minimum Maintenance Standards (MMS) for Municipal Highways* provides municipalities with the ability to declare a significant weather event for roadways, sidewalks and/or bicycle lanes under their jurisdiction when a weather hazard has been identified that poses a significant danger to road users and an alert has been issued by Environment Canada.

The declaration of a Significant Weather Event will advise the public of the potential dangers associated with the weather hazard and deem City roads, sidewalks and/or bicycle lanes in a state of repair with respect to snow accumulation and ice conditions for the duration of the declaration.

PURPOSE

This Policy outlines provides criteria under which Public Works senior management team may declare a Significant Weather Event as defined in the *Ontario Regulation 239/02, Minimum Maintenance Standards for Municipal Highways*.

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During an active Significant Weather Event declaration, the roadways, sidewalks, and/or bicycle lanes under the municipality are deemed to be in a state of repair with respect to snow accumulation and/or ice formation such that standard timelines as stated in the *Minimum Maintenance Standards* for municipalities to meet the maintenance obligations are suspended until the Significant Weather Event is declared to be concluded.

SCOPE

This Policy will apply to all roads, sidewalks, and bicycle lanes designated to be maintained by the City of Vaughan, internally and/or through contractors.

LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS

Ontario Regulation 239/02, Minimum Maintenance Standards for Municipal Highways.

DEFINITIONS

1. **Alert:** a transmitted signal used to heighten awareness and/or initiate preparation for action. Alerts are issued by Environment and Climate Change Canada's Meteorological Service (MSC) for weather or environmental hazard events that are either occurring, imminent, or forecast to develop. Alerts are currently issued as special weather statements, advisories, watches and warnings.
2. **Bicycle Lane:** (a) a portion of a roadway that has been designated by pavement markings or signage for the preferential or exclusive use of cyclists, or (b) a portion of a roadway that has been designated for the exclusive use of cyclists by signage and a physical or marked buffer
3. **Road:** The entire right-of-way comprising a common or public thoroughfare, including a highway, street, bridge and any other structure incidental thereto.
4. **Salting:** The use of treated rock salt (rock salt coated with performance-enhancing liquids) for ice prevention and treatment.

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5. **Sidewalk:** Typically, a paved path for pedestrians/cyclists at the side of a road. Where mentioned, sidewalks include main sidewalks, residential sidewalks, walkways, crosswalks, school crossings, park walkways, bicycle paths, and multi-use pathways.
6. **Significant Weather Event:** An approaching or occurring weather hazard with the potential to pose a significant danger to roads, sidewalks, and facility users.
7. **Snow Accumulation:** The natural accumulation of any of the following that, alone or together, covers more than half a lane width of a roadway: newly-fallen snow, wind-blown snow, or slush.
8. **Weather hazard:** weather hazards determined by Environment Canada as meeting the criteria for the issuance of an alert under its Public Weather Alerting Program. This clearly indicates that Environment Canada must first issue an Alert before a municipality can declare a Significant Weather Event.
9. **Winter Event:** A winter maintenance response due to a weather condition (or forecast) that affects roads, sidewalks, and/or facilities such as snowfall, wind-blown snow, sleet, freezing rain, frost or ice. A series of activities is performed including: salting, anti-icing, plowing, windrow clearing, snow removal, and/or handwork. A formal notification of the start and end of an event is sent by e-mail by the Department Leads (Supervisor/Foreperson).

POLICY

1. Declaration of a Significant Weather Event
 - 1.1 As per *Ontario Regulation 239/02, Minimum Maintenance Standards for Municipal Highways*, the City may declare a Significant Weather Event when a winter weather hazard is approaching or occurring and has the potential to pose a significant danger to City road, sidewalk, and/or bicycle lane users and where Environment Canada has issued an alert under its Public Weather Alerting Program.
 - 1.2 The purpose of the declaration of a Significant Weather Event include:
 - To advise the public of the potential dangers associated with the weather hazard

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- To deem City roads, sidewalks, and bicycle lanes in a state of repair with respect to snow accumulation and/or ice conditions, thereby, suspending the standard timelines as stated in this Policy to meet maintenance obligations for the duration of the declaration
- 1.3 Authority: *Ontario Regulation 239/02*, provides authority for the City to declare a Significant Weather Event. A Significant Weather Event may be declared at the discretion of the Deputy City Manager, Public Works (or designate).
- 1.4 Factors that Public Works staff shall consider in declaring a Significant Weather Event include:
- The issuance of an Environment Canada Public Weather Alert
 - Confirmation through local forecasting and observations that the weather hazard which is the subject of the Environment Canada Alert is actually imminent or occurring in the City
- 1.5 The City will communicate the declaration of a Significant Weather Event for City roads, sidewalks, and bicycle lanes to the public through the appropriate medium in accordance with methods outlined in the *Minimum Maintenance Standards (MMS)*.
- 1.6 The City may also communicate the declaration of a Significant Weather Event for City roads, sidewalks, and bicycle lanes directly to its neighbouring municipalities within York region but assumes no role or liability for the actions or inactions of any of these agencies in making their own declarations or maintenance decisions.
- 1.7 If the City declares a Significant Weather Event for City roads, sidewalks, and/or bicycle lanes, the standard for addressing snow and/or ice accumulation until the declaration of the end of the significant weather event is to:
- Monitor the weather in accordance with the *MMS*; and,
 - If deemed practicable by Public Works staff, to deploy resources to address snow and/or ice accumulation on City roadways, sidewalks, and bicycle lanes, starting from the time that Public Works Operations staff deem appropriate to do so
- 1.8 All City roadways, sidewalks, and bicycle lanes, within the City are deemed to be in a state of repair with respect to snow and/or ice accumulation until the time allowed (under this Policy) expires after the Deputy City Manager, Public Works (or designate) has declared the end of the Significant Weather Event for the City.

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1.9 Following the end of the weather hazard and/or winter event for which a Significant Weather Event for City roads, sidewalks, and bicycle lanes is declared, the City shall:

- Declare the end of the significant weather event when the Deputy City Manager, Public Works (or designate) deem appropriate to do so
- Address snow and/or ice accumulation on City roadways, sidewalks, and facilities in accordance with this Policy

ADMINISTRATION

Administered by the Office of the City Clerk.

Review Schedule:	Other (specify)Other (specify) 1 Year1 Year	Next Review Date:	Click or tap to enter a date.
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Related Policy(ies):	
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Related By-Law(s):	
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Procedural Document:	
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Revision History

Date:	Description:
Click or tap to enter a date.	Establishment of policy
Click or tap to enter a date.	
Click or tap to enter a date.	