city of CINCINNATI

SNOW & ICE CONTROL PLAN

2026-2027



Mark A. Riley, Director
Department of Public Services
1115 Bates Avenue
Cincinnati, OH
45225

Purpose & Objectives

Purpose

The City of Cincinnati Department of Public Services (DPS) Snow & Ice Control Plan establishes procedures for the effective deployment of personnel, equipment, materials, and technology to maintain safe and passable roadways during winter weather events.
The primary objective of winter operations is to maintain passable roadways throughout the city's transportation network. A passable roadway is defined as a roadway condition that allows traffic to move safely using reasonable caution based on existing weather conditions. A passable roadway should not be interpreted as bare pavement.

Objectives

The City strives to:

- Maintain safe traveling conditions.
- Support emergency response and public safety operations.
- Maintain access to businesses, schools, healthcare facilities, and public transportation.
- Utilize personnel, equipment, and materials efficiently and responsibly.

Winter weather events vary significantly in severity and duration. During a typical winter season, Cincinnati receives approximately 20 to 25 inches of snowfall. Operational decisions are influenced by several factors, including:

- Snowfall rate and accumulation
- Moisture content
- Sleet and freezing rain
- Air and pavement temperatures
- Wind speed
- Time of day
- Storm duration
- Intervals between weather events

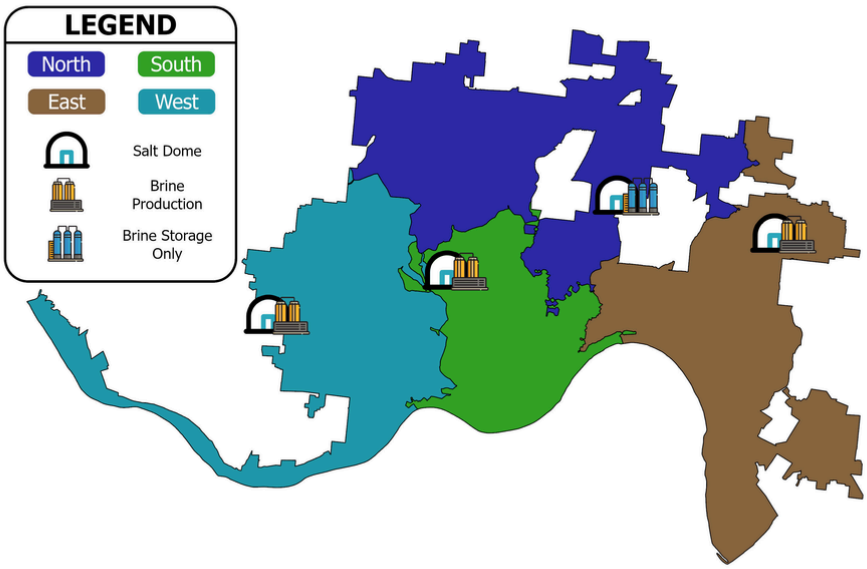
Successfully maintaining safe winter travel conditions requires coordination among the Department of Public Services, public safety agencies, emergency responders, partner organizations, and Cincinnati residents.



Operations Overview

The Department of Public Services is responsible for winter maintenance operations on approximately 3,112 lane miles of city-maintained roadway throughout Cincinnati. These lane miles include main thoroughfares, collector streets, residential streets, bridges, overpasses, cul-de-sacs, and alleys.

Winter operations are organized into four geographic service regions:



Each region is assigned equipment, personnel, supervisors, and designated snow routes. Resources may be reassigned between regions as necessary to address changing conditions or significant weather events.
Roadway Weather Stations

The City utilizes strategically located Roadway Weather Stations to support winter operations and provide real-time information on:

- Pavement temperature
- Air temperature
- Surface moisture conditions
- Roadway surface conditions
- Forecast trends

This information is combined with weather forecasts, traffic conditions, and field observations to determine treatment strategies, staffing levels, and equipment deployment.

The City's goal is to maintain passable roadways while prioritizing routes that are critical to mobility, emergency response, public transportation, and public safety.

Roadway Priorities

To effectively maintain more than 3,100 lane miles of roadway, DPS utilizes a three-tier service priority system. Route priorities are determined by traffic volume, access to emergency routes, access to public transportation, and access to schools. The priority plan for snow removal divides streets into 67 priority 1 routes, priority 2 routes, and priority 3 routes.

Priority 1 - Primary Routes

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Priority 2 - Collector Streets

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Priority 3 - Residential Routes

Priority 1 Routes

Priority 1 Routes receive the highest level of service and are the first roadways treated during winter weather events.

These routes include:

- Major arterial roadways
- Emergency response corridors
- Metro transit routes
- Hospital access routes
- Significant hills
- Bridges and overpasses
- High-volume transportation corridors

Priority 1 Routes are continuously monitored and serviced throughout winter weather events to maintain passable conditions.

Priority 2 Routes

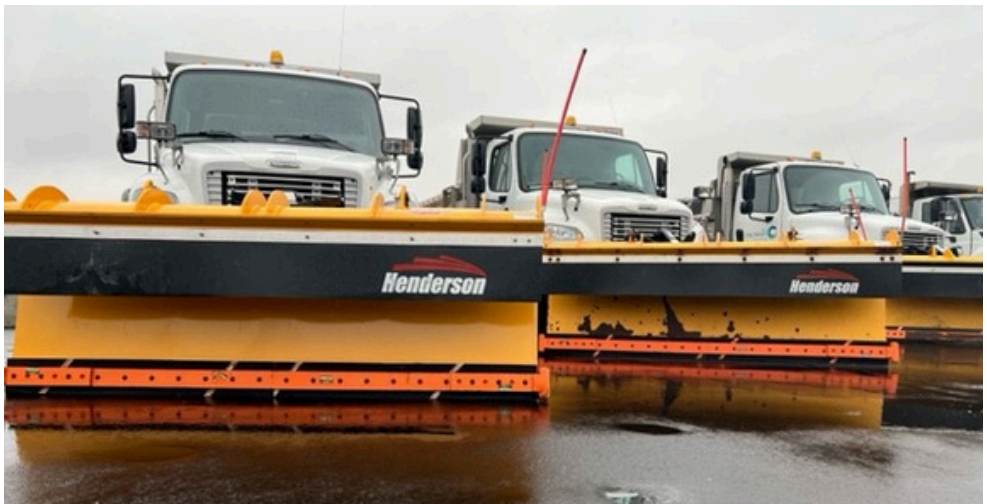
Collector Streets connect neighborhoods to major transportation corridors and provide access to schools, business districts, community facilities, and Priority 1 Routes.

Collector Streets are generally serviced after Priority 1 Routes have been made passable.

Priority 3 Routes

Residential Streets include local neighborhood roadways, cul-de-sacs, dead-end streets, alleys, and other local access roads.

Residential Streets are generally serviced after Priority 1 Routes and Priority 2 Routes have been addressed.



Winter Storm Response

DPS continuously monitors weather forecasts and roadway conditions before, during, and after winter weather events.
Prior to a winter event, operational staff conduct pre-event planning meetings to evaluate:

- Type of winter weather event
- Expected snowfall or ice accumulation
- Predicted pavement temperatures
- Material inventories
- Treatment methods and application strategies
- Equipment availability
- Staffing requirements
- Duration of operations
- Scheduled public activities and special events

Response plans are adjusted as weather conditions evolve.

Anti-Icing

Anti-icing is a proactive treatment strategy designed to prevent snow and ice from bonding to roadway surfaces.

This strategy typically involves the application of liquid brine, BeetHeet, or pre-treated materials before precipitation begins.

Bridges, overpasses, hills, and other locations prone to icing receive special attention and may be treated on a routine schedule throughout the winter season.

De-Icing

De-icing is a reactive treatment strategy used after snow or ice has accumulated on the roadway surface.

De-icing operations may include:

- Plowing
- Rock salt application
- Brine application
- Calcium chloride treatment
- Mechanical snow removal

The objective of de-icing is to break the bond between accumulated snow or ice and the pavement surface, allowing for removal and restoration of passable roadway conditions.

Winter Storm Response

Plowing Operations

Plowing remains the most effective method of snow removal and is the foundation of Cincinnati's winter maintenance program.

When conditions allow, plowing is prioritized to remove snow and ice before chemical treatments are applied. Removing accumulation quickly improves roadway safety and increases the effectiveness of treatment materials.

Snow Hauling Operations

During major winter storms, snow accumulation may exceed available storage capacity in densely developed areas, particularly within the Central Business District (CBD).

When necessary, DPS utilizes loaders, backhoes, and haul trucks to remove snow and transport it to approved disposal locations.

Equipment

Winter Fleet

The Department of Public Services deploys a variety of equipment during winter operations, including:

- Tandem-axle trucks
- Single-axle trucks
- Contractor dump trucks
- Pickup trucks
- Brine trucks
- Front-end loaders

All winter fleet equipment is inspected, maintained, and prepared prior to the start of the winter season.







Materials



Rock Salt

Rock salt serves as the City's primary snow and ice control material and remains effective under most winter weather conditions.

Salt Brine

Salt brine is primarily utilized as an anti-icing treatment applied before winter weather events to help prevent snow and ice from bonding to roadway surfaces.

Beet Heet

DPS utilizes Beet Heet as a performance-enhancing additive in winter treatment operations.

Benefits include:

- Improved performance at lower temperatures
- Increased roadway adhesion
- Reduced material scatter and loss
- Enhanced de-icing effectiveness
- Extended treatment duration

Staffing & Operations

Winter operations are supported by trained personnel from multiple divisions within the Department of Public Services. While DPS does not maintain a dedicated snow removal workforce, employees are assigned winter response responsibilities and receive ongoing training and preparation for winter operations.



Personnel are deployed from four strategically located operational facilities:

Dunbar Facility (East Region)
Valley View Facility (South Region)
Crookshank Facility (West Region)
Traffic Aids Facility (North Region)

Winter Night Force

The Winter Night Force (WNF) operates from mid-November through March and consists of:

25 employees
2 supervisors
1 dispatcher

This team provides overnight winter maintenance coverage and supports citywide winter response efforts.

Major Storm Operations

During major winter events, personnel may be assigned to 12-hour operational shifts:

Shift A: 7:00 AM – 7:00 PM
Shift B: 7:00 PM – 7:00 AM

Supervisors continuously evaluate conditions and adjust staffing levels and deployment strategies as operational needs change.

Snowplow Tracker, 311 & Public Communications

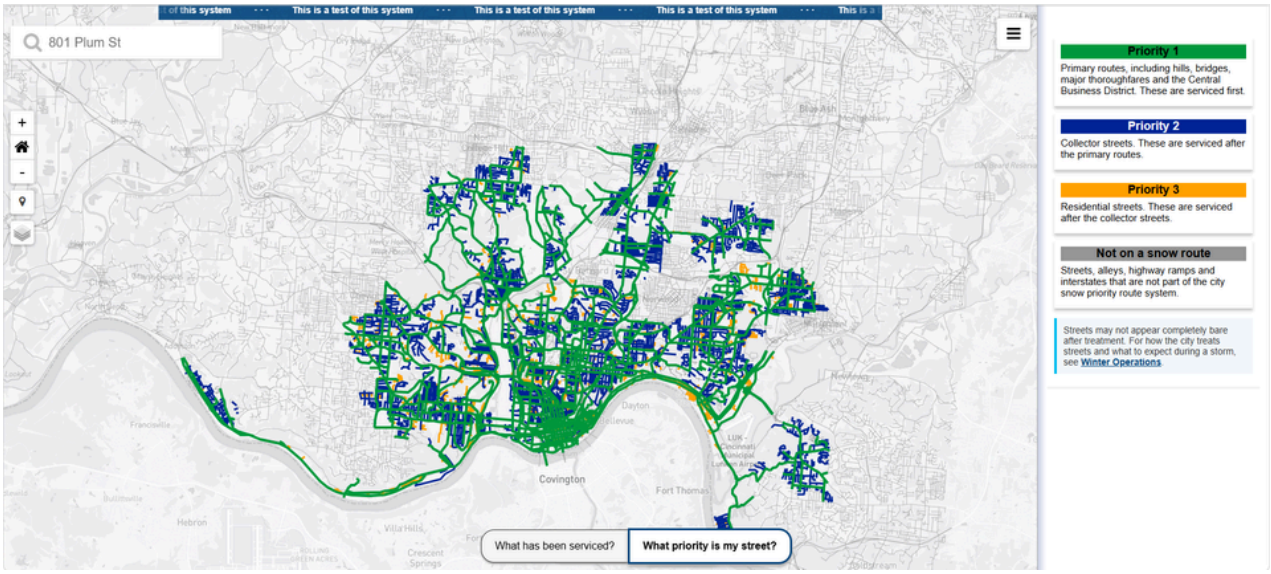
Snowplow Tracker

Beginning with the 2026-2027 winter season, the City of Cincinnati will utilize the ETCH Snowplow Tracker platform.

The system will allow residents to:

- View when a street was last serviced
- Identify street priority routes
- Track winter operations in near real-time

The platform improves transparency while enhancing system reliability, mapping capabilities, and the ability to handle increased usage during significant weather events.



311Cincy

Residents may report snow and ice concerns through by calling 311, visiting www.311Cincy.com, or downloading the 311Cincy mobile app.

Public Communications

Winter operations information may be shared through:

- City of Cincinnati website
- Social media platforms
- Press releases
- News media outlets
- Community organizations
- Cincy Alerts (emergency notification system)

  Information may include:
  - Operational updates
  - Snow Emergency declarations
  - Parking restrictions
  - Winter preparedness information
  - Snow Tracker information

Snow Emergencies & Parking Restrictions

The City Manager may declare a Snow Emergency when winter weather conditions warrant additional traffic and parking restrictions.

During a Snow Emergency:

- Parking restrictions may be implemented on designated Snow Emergency Routes.
- Vehicles obstructing snow operations may be cited and/or towed.
- Emergency information will be distributed through official City communication channels.
- Residents are expected to comply with posted restrictions and emergency directives.

Snow Emergency declarations help ensure efficient snow removal operations while preserving access for police, fire, EMS, and other critical services.

Sidewalk Responsibilities

Property owners are responsible for maintaining sidewalks adjacent to their property in accordance with City regulations.



Prompt snow and ice removal helps:

- Improve pedestrian safety
- Maintain accessibility
- Support public transit access
- Enhance ADA accessibility

Residents and property owners should never place snow, ice, or other materials into public roadways during snow removal activities.

Section 723-57 of the Cincinnati Municipal Code: Requires property owners to remove snow.

Section 723-59 of the Cincinnati Municipal Code: Requires property owners to remove ice.

ORC 723.011 (Ohio Revised Code): The penalty for violating these sections is a fine of $25.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is a passable roadway?
A passable roadway is a roadway condition that allows traffic to move safely using reasonable caution based on existing weather conditions.

Why are some streets serviced before others?
Streets are serviced according to the City's established priority system. Primary streets are addressed first, followed by Collector Streets and Residential Streets.

What materials does the City use during winter storms?
The City utilizes rock salt, salt brine, calcium chloride, and Beet Heet as part of its winter maintenance program.

What are Weather Stations?
Weather Stations are strategically located throughout the city and provide DPS leadership with real-time information regarding pavement temperatures, weather conditions, and roadway surface conditions.

How do I track snowplow activity?
Residents may monitor snowplow activity through the ETCH Snow Plow Tracker platform: https://insights.cincinnati-oh.gov/stories/s/Snow-Plow-Tracker/usdr-2hia/

How do I report a snow or ice concern?
Snow and ice concerns may be reported by calling 311, visiting www.311Cincy.com, or by downloading the 311Cincy mobile app.

What happens during a Snow Emergency?
Additional parking restrictions and operational measures may be implemented to facilitate snow removal operations and maintain emergency access throughout the city.

How can residents help?
Successful winter operations depend on cooperation between the City and the community.
Don't Crowd the Plow!

- Remain at least 200 feet behind snowplows whenever possible.
- Avoid passing active snowplows.
- Park off-street when available.
- Drive at speeds appropriate for weather conditions.