

PUBLIC WORKS



Pipeline

With Fall Beauty Comes Fall Cleanup

By Dawn Wills

It's that time of year when the leaves turn a vibrant red, gold and orange, but with that beauty comes yard cleanup. The City reminds residents that there are proper ways to collect and remove leaves from their yards.

The City does not pick up brush, yard waste or any other kind of refuse. Leaves can be composted or disposed of through local garbage haulers.

"Since January 2010, State law has required that yard waste be placed in compostable bags," said Recycling Coordinator Solvei Wilmot. "Residents should check with their refuse hauler to make sure that they are signed up for yard waste removal, which is separate from recycling and garbage services."

Residents who have their refuse haulers collect their yard waste are required to use compostable bags – either paper bags

or those clearly marked as compostable. Compostable bags are distinct from regular plastic bags because they are usually clear or a green-tinted opaque color. Most home improvement, grocery and hardware stores carry them. Be careful not to purchase biodegradable bags. They are different from compostable bags because they contain plastic.

The City does not have a drop-off location for yard waste. If residents choose to hire a private lawn service to remove yard debris, contractors must not dispose of residential waste in City streets or gutters.

It's important to keep fallen leaves out of the street to help prevent clogging storm sewers, which can lead to water runoff, backups and flooding. In the fall, three street sweepers work four to six weeks collecting leaves throughout the City. If residents rake leaves from their yards into the streets, the street sweepers will not be able to keep up.

"It really slows us down when residents put big piles of leaves into the streets," said Streets Supervisor Shawn Anderson.

Residents are encouraged to inspect gutters and storm drains in front of their properties and remove any debris that appears to be blocking passage to storm sewers and dispose of it properly. Keeping leaves from entering storm drains also helps reduce the amount of phosphorus that leads to the overgrowth of algae and other plants in lakes and streams.

"Leaves and grass clippings may seem natural, but these pollutants can cause a lot of problems for our lakes and streams," said Water Resources Coordinator Jessica Wilson. "Keeping streets and storm drains clean helps to make our community healthier and more beautiful. Every lawn makes a difference."

**Winter Parking
Rules Keep Streets
Clear of Snow**

See page 8

Hydroseed Makes for Better Lawns Following Street Reconstruction

By Jordan Gilgenbach

A close-up photograph of vibrant green grass blades, some with small water droplets on them, set against a background of a light green geometric overlay. The grass is the central focus of the image, illustrating the 'better lawns' mentioned in the title.

On average, hydroseed costs about 75 percent less than sod. It is also more resilient to weeds, pests and unpredictable weather.

During a street reconstruction, lawns are often dug up within the right-of-way. When the projects wrap up, crews place hydroseed to regrow damaged lawns.

Previously, the City used sod to restore lawns. The City's Engineering Department found that while sod is attractive when first laid, that honeymoon period quickly ends. In 2013, the City switched to hydroseeding, a proven performer in producing healthy lawns.

"Sod is grown in near-perfect conditions, so it looks good at first, but requires a lot of water and maintenance to get established, and often dies quickly," said City Engineer Chad Millner. "It's not the most resilient turf material and is easily susceptible to heat and lack of moisture."

"Hydroseed has better long-term survival since it's grown in place and in the actual conditions rather than 'perfect' conditions."

Hydroseed is a mix of fertilizer, mulch and a seed mix specially mixed for our area. It is placed on loose soil and the roots penetrate the ground and grow naturally. With sod, Millner said, "the turf is growing already, and the root base needs to re-establish itself in the in-place material, which could take longer."

Hydroseed costs significantly less than sod, adding to overall project cost savings. On average, hydroseed costs about 75 percent less than sod. It is also more resilient to weeds, pests and unpredictable weather.

Following a street reconstruction, the contractor maintains the hydroseed for 90 days after placement. The contractor will water, fertilize and mow the hydroseed, as needed, during that time. At the

Good maintenance practices make for a good lawn. Follow these tips to maintain a hydroseeded lawn:

- Keep soil moist with light sprinkling in the morning, late afternoon or early evening.
- Continue watering even after the grass looks established.
- Fertilization requirements vary, depending on the time of year. Consult a reputable nursery or seed center for fertilizer specifications.
- Mow as soon as the grass blades are 3 to 4 inches high. Set the mower deck to the highest setting, and make sure the blades are sharp. Dull blades can bruise and damage new grass.
- Do not collect the clippings as they help feed the soil and accelerates development.
- Weeds will likely appear and are best controlled by growing good, healthy grass and following proper maintenance techniques.

end of the maintenance period, a final inspection is done, and areas that do not meet contract specifications will be re-hydroseeded. Once the hydroseeded area is given a passing grade, maintenance becomes the full responsibility of the homeowner.

For more information, visit EdinaMN.gov/Engineering or call 952-826-0371.



City Offers Training for Snowplow Operators

By Krystal Caron

The City of Edina has partnered with the Minnehaha Creek and Nine Mile Creek watershed districts to hold training sessions over the next several years to inform private snowplow operators and other individuals interested in learning more about reducing salt use throughout the community.

“People often don’t realize that you don’t need that much, so the training helps you understand when is too much and when you’re just throwing money away,” explained Water Resources Coordinator Jessica Wilson. “Using more salt is not necessarily more effective.”

The classes will cover all winter roadway maintenance, including plowing before ice forms and calibrating equipment, in addition to improving chloride (salt) use. Some classes will focus on roadways, while others are focused on parking lots and sidewalks.

“Chloride is a perpetual pollutant, so it’s permanent,” said Wilson. “It’s killing plants, bugs and fish and disrupting the ecosystem. Every fall and spring, depending on the lake and how deep it is, the lake will mix and turn over. If you have a lot of chloride in the water, it gets really heavy in the bottom and it won’t flip over – and it can even sink down into our ground water resources.”

This training was first held in February 2016 and attracted staff from surrounding municipalities, in addition to all City plow operators and staff who work on street-related projects. All attendees receive a five-year certification from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA).

While residents are welcome to attend, the training is intended for snowplow operators and private applicators. Wilson encourages residents to spread the word to area businesses, so that they in turn can share this with private applicators who they use to plow their driveways and parking lots.

“There are several things we’re trying to balance. Safety is the No. 1 concern for our Public Works crew, and then customer service is really a point of pride for our City. So, we’re trying to balance all of that in addition to the environmental concerns,” said Wilson. “It’s not a silver bullet – it’s not like you attend the training and you have all the answers. But this training really tries to help people understand that there is a balance you can find using less salt while maintaining that high level of customer service and safety.”

Edina is a part of both the Minnehaha Creek and Nine Mile Creek watersheds. Both creeks are polluted with chlorides, which come from road salt and water softeners.

No dates for the classes had been set as of press time. If you would like to learn more or sign up for classes, contact Wilson at 952-826-0445 or jwilson@EdinaMN.gov

If you see public areas with an abundance of salt, please notify the City by using the “Report A Problem” feature on the City website, calling 952-826-0300 or reporting it through the City’s mobile app, Edina To Go.

Serve the Community by Adopting a Hydrant

By Dana Rademacher

It is crucial that each and every one of the more than 2,000 fire hydrants in Edina remains clear and accessible for firefighters responding to a fire emergency. Being such an important task, the City has partnered with the community to help make this process more efficient with the Adopt-a-Hydrant program.

It takes 20 turns to open a fire hydrant for use, which is why keeping a clear three-foot radius is required by fire code regulations. During an emergency, every moment counts, and firefighters do not want to be delayed by obstructions.

While it may be tempting for homeowners with hydrants to try to spruce up the area with decorative plants or flowers, it may actually hinder a firefighter's ability to reach and use the hydrant.

"Each fire hydrant is capable of pumping 1,500 to 2,000 gallons of water per minute. Since we cannot transport all of the water needed, we rely on fire hydrants," explained Fire Marshal Jeff Siems. "We typically pump the water we bring on the engine in 30 seconds, making locating, connecting and opening a fire hydrant as soon as possible critical for our operations."

It is especially important to keep this in mind with the winter months fast approaching. After a heavy snowstorm, hydrants can become covered or obstructed by the snow.

By adopting a fire hydrant, residents take on the responsibility of caring for a hydrant in their area by keeping it free of brush and other obstructions, and shoveling around it after a snowstorm.

"The main intent of the program is to ensure that the fire hydrant is ready for use at any time. This includes keeping a three-foot clearance all the way around the hydrant," added Siems.

Residents can also help by volunteering to re-paint a hydrant. Public Works will provide paint to anyone willing to paint a fire hydrant, which only requires one can of fire-hydrant-red spray paint. To pick up the paint, visit the Public Works & Park Maintenance Facility, 7450 Metro Blvd.

"Staff and public partnerships like the Adopt-a-Hydrant program help foster a sense of stewardship for the infrastructure while serving the pragmatic need of having easily visible and accessible hydrants for public safety," said Public Works Coordinator Dave Goergen.

To sign up yourself or your community organization to adopt a fire hydrant, visit EdinaMN.gov/adopt-a-hydrant.

For more information, call the Edina Public Works Department at 952-826-0376 or the Edina Fire-Rescue & Inspections Department at 952-826-0330.

SNOWPLOW HOTLINE

952-826-1628

Snowplow Hotline Helps Ease Winter Stress

By Dana Rademacher

A snow-filled wonderland can make Minnesota one of the best places to live in the frigid winter months. However, the excess snow can also cause severe traffic backups, undesirable driving conditions and, sometimes, uncertainty about when local streets will be plowed. Edina's Snowplow Hotline helps with that uncertainty.

Rolled out two winters ago, the Snowplow Hotline is a service for residents to call throughout the winter to get up-to-date snowplow schedules and information.

"It's a really informative tool for residents," said Streets Supervisor John Scheerer. "Oftentimes, the media will cover MnDOT's plan for clearing highways, but they don't usually include Edina's plans for local roads."

When residents call the hotline, they will hear a voicemail message that explains when Public Works plans to start plowing and for how long they will plow.

"During a big storm event, sometimes our plows aren't able to get out right away," explained Scheerer. "This gives people an

easy way to figure out when they can expect the streets to be plowed."

The two street supervisors, Shawn Anderson and Scheerer, record the messages at any hour, even sometimes at 2 or 3 a.m. Having this service allows residents to stay alerted during these storms, especially since it can be a safety concern.

During a heavy storm, Public Works institutes what they call an "all-out-plow," meaning staff from multiple divisions within Public Works all go on the streets to clear the snow. This could happen 20 to 30 times a winter.

"It's dangerous to not plow, and massive snowfalls can lead to property damage and traffic safety concerns. That's why Edina is more aggressive than other cities in getting the streets plowed quickly," Scheerer added.

Rest assured, this service will give you the updates when you need them most. To access the alerts, call 952-826-1628.

For more information on the Snowplow Hotline, call Public Works at 952-826-0376.



Dealing With a Watermain Break

By Krystal Caron

Over the course of a year, the City generally experiences between 25 and 30 watermain breaks. Though the City hopes to avoid broken watermains, it's an expected part of life during a Minnesota winter.

'The biggest help to us is for drivers to pay attention to traffic signs, especially if we have to totally close down a road and put up detours.'

"There's no way to prevent watermain breaks. They are the result of earth moving and shifting, and frost going into the ground and frost coming out of the ground in the spring," explained Utility Supervisor Gary Wells. "You'll know there is a watermain break when you see water in the street. The water usually surfaces because there is enough volume."

It's rare for watermain breaks to result in water backing up into homes, but it

has happened in unique circumstances. If you do see water pooling on your street, call the Public Works Department immediately. Public Works can be reached at 952-826-0375 between 7 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. Outside those hours, contact Police at 952-826-1610.

"It's never too cold or too late at night for us to begin work on repairing a watermain. This is always a priority because of the public safety factor; you've got water coming out onto the road, spreading out and freezing," said Wells.

After noticing a watermain break, residents in the area will continue to have normal water service until Public Works staff arrive to shut down that section of the watermain; notice is

usually given before water becomes unavailable. Unless complications arise, repairs usually are completed in as little as three or four hours.

Wells urges residents to heed traffic control signs and drive slowly through the area of a watermain break.

"The biggest help to us is for drivers to pay attention to traffic signs, especially if we have to totally close down a road and put up detours," he said. "When we're digging down to the pipe to make the repair, we usually have a hole that could be 10 feet wide, 15 feet long and 8 feet deep, so we want to be sure that vehicles stay back from that area."

For more information, contact Wells at 952-826-0316 or gwells@EdinaMN.gov.

**No parking on
the street from
1 to 6 a.m. Nov. 1
through
March 31.**

Winter Parking Rules Keep Streets Clear of Snow

Packed ice, snow and deep ruts wreak havoc on a car's suspension. With Edina's winter parking regulations, the Public Works Department is able to better remove snow and ice to keep roads safe and in better condition.

"We benefit greatly from the winter parking hours," said Public Works Director Brian Olson. "They allow our Public Works guys to start plowing immediately when overnight snowfall occurs."

Public Works employees take pride in clearing Edina's streets of snow and ice quickly. When cars obstruct the roadway, it takes more time to clear the road, as it cannot be cleared completely without removing the obstructing vehicle.

Long before plows take to the road, Edina Police Officers patrol the City looking for obstructions.

"Towing vehicles is the last thing we want to do, but we need to get the cars off the street after a snowfall of 1.5 inches or more," said Edina Police Chief Dave Nelson. "We do our best to get ahold of the vehicle owner before towing."

Plow drivers try to plow around vehicles left on the street, but depending on the amount and nature of the snowfall, complications with visibility often occur. Additionally, vehicles left on the street may get blocked due to the way plows push the snow.

Residents shouldn't follow the ordinances just to ensure streets are plowed well, but also to protect their vehicles.

"Plow drivers adjust their speed based on road conditions, but they still need momentum to move snow," said Public Works Coordinator Dave Goergen. "With poor visibility, they can easily hit vehicles parked on the street."

Nelson said adherence to winter parking restrictions not only helps plow drivers, but helps residents avoid a possible ticket and tow.

According to local law, no vehicle may be parked on a street, highway or alley under these conditions:

- From 1 to 6 a.m. Nov. 1 through March 31, regardless of weather conditions.
- When 1.5 inches or more of snow has fallen. Once streets and roadways have been plowed to the curb line, residents can then park vehicles on designated roadways.
- For six hours after a snowfall has ended, unless City traffic signs specifically allow vehicles to park on roadways.

For more information about winter parking ordinances, contact the Police Department at 952-826-1610.



Snow Forts are a Hidden Winter Hazard

By Dawn Wills

While a major snowfall means extra shoveling for adults, children see it as an opportunity to climb, build and slide on the mountains of white stuff. It's important for all residents to remember the potential dangers that come with winter fun, especially snow forts and tunnels.

Many children like to build their structures in the largest drifts of snow, which are oftentimes alongside the road due to piles created by snowplows.

However, it's because of the plows that adults should remind children this is a dangerous place to be.

Children tend to make the entry points of their structures off of their driveway away from the direction snowplow drivers approach. Snowplow drivers cannot tell the difference between a snowdrift with or without a fort, unless there is a visible sign of activity such as shovels or sleds lying outside. From inside a fort, most noise is muffled, so there is no indication of an approaching plow. City snowplow drivers usually have no idea a child is burrowing inside a snowbank.

"Drivers have five to six levers and buttons in the truck to operate the wings, plows and sander or salt spreaders," said Street Supervisor John Scheerer. "They have to pay attention to traffic and sometimes they have already put in a long shift on the road."

'Every year, across the country during the winter months, there are news stories about the tragic loss of life involving children playing on roadside snowbanks ...'

"Every year, across the country during the winter months, there are news stories about the tragic loss of life involving children playing on roadside snowbanks and snow forts that can either collapse or be hit by a snowplow," said Edina Police Chief Dave Nelson. "Parents should talk to their children about the dangers of roadside snow banks and snow forts."

Children should not play on roadside snowbanks or ditch slopes. Do not use these areas for sledding or sliding. The driver of a snowplow or other vehicle may not see a child. "We have a great park system with plenty of sledding hills. Kids can have fun without being along the side of the roadway," said Scheerer.

Children also should not be left alone while they're playing outside. Younger children should always be well supervised outdoors. Even if a parent is not supervising them, a child who is playing with a friend can call for help, and that could be the difference between life and death.

For more information, contact the Public Works Department at 952-826-0376.



Keep Sidewalks Clear During Winter Months

By Kaylin Eidsness

The City plows roughly 25 of 77 miles of sidewalk within Edina, clearing snow for safe and efficient travel during the winter months. Property owners are tasked with removing the remaining snow from sidewalks that border their land.

Edina City Code states, “All snow and ice shall be removed from a sidewalk by the owner of the property adjoining the sidewalk within 48 hours of the cessation of the precipitation.”

“The City operates on a complaint basis, which is important when you talk about uniformity of enforcement,” said Public Works Director Brian Olson. “The City doesn’t want to create work for people, but at the same time, if nine out of 10 people shovel their sidewalk, but that 10th person doesn’t, it basically renders the sidewalk useless.”

Blocked paths can create problems for those navigating sidewalks.

“If residents don’t clear the snow from their sidewalks, pedestrians have difficulty walking through the snow – especially the elderly or disabled. With no other option, people are left to walk in the street, which is a dangerous choice,” said Transportation Planner Mark Nolan.

Streets Supervisor Shawn Anderson emphasized the importance of avoiding the danger of kids walking in busy streets because sidewalks were not cleared.

But, it’s not only younger residents who benefit from cleared sidewalks; emergency personnel, postal workers and delivery people count on sidewalks being clear and ice-free to do their jobs in a safe and effective manner.

The City may send a letter prompting snow removal if a sidewalk isn’t cleared by a property owner within 48 hours of a snowfall. The City will eventually clear the sidewalk and assess the cost to the property owner in the event that snow is not removed in a timely matter.

State-funded sidewalks, due to higher amounts of traffic, are cleared by the City. These sidewalks include the ones bordering 50th & France; they are wider and more accessible, making it easier for Public Works employees to maintain.

Residents are encouraged to reach out to and assist fellow neighbors, friends and family if they are unable to clear their own sidewalks.

“Neighbors helping neighbors is something we always encourage,” said Anderson.

As well as clearing sidewalks, residents are obligated to abide by City ordinances when hiring private contractors to handle their snow removal needs. Private plows must not deposit snow onto or across a roadway. Any snow that

is removed from a sidewalk or driveway must remain on that property or be hauled away at the property owner’s expense.

Property owners will receive a warning letter for violations on the first offense. For a second offense, the City may issue the property owner a fine of up to \$700.

Residents are encouraged to reach out to and assist fellow neighbors, friends and family if they are unable to clear their own sidewalks.

The City has a list of organizations and groups that provide snow removal services. One service the City recommends is the H.O.M.E Program (Household & Outside Maintenance for Elderly), a program that “mobilizes open-hearted people to bring you affordable home maintenance and chore services delivered by trusted professionals and community volunteers.”

For more information on the H.O.M.E. program, visit seniorcommunity.org or call 952-541-1019.

For more information on the Public Works Department’s removal of snow, contact Anderson at 952-826-0313.

Maintenance Extends Life of Mailbox

It's easy to forget about your mailbox when getting your home ready for winter. However, a little maintenance can help extend its life.

When clearing the streets following a snowfall, snowplow operators take great care not to damage property. On rare occasions, a plow might tip over or cause structural damage to a residential mailbox.

"Most mailbox damage is the result of rotten posts or a mailbox poorly anchored to the post," said Streets Supervisor John Scheerer, who also reminds residents to check their mailbox post close to the ground for signs of wear and rotting. Such damage weakens a mailbox, and lowers its chances of making it through the winter.

If damage is reported, complaints are evaluated on a case-by-case basis. If an inspection determines the cause of damage was a collision with a City

plow or equipment, the Public Works Department's Streets Division will install a standard size, non-decorative metal mailbox. If necessary, a 4-by-4 inch, decay-resistant wood support post will also be installed in the spring. Alternatively, the City will reimburse a homeowner \$50 for a replacement box and post.

In most cases, winter mailbox damage is the result of heavy snow or excessive ice. In these cases, the homeowner is responsible for repairs. Likewise, if a mailbox is made unserviceable by age or lack of maintenance, the City is not responsible for the purchase or installation of a replacement.

During the winter months, residents should monitor the quantity of snow

and debris surrounding their mailboxes. After City plows have removed snow from streets, residents should clear snow surrounding the mailbox. According to the U.S. Postal Service, failure to keep the area in front of the mailbox safe for mail carriers may cause disruption in mail service.

For more information, contact the City of Edina Public Works Department at 952-826-0376. To report a problem, use the Edina To Go app or visit EdinaMN.gov/report-problem.

— Compiled by Kaylin Eidsness