



Working for Municipalities

A Guideline for Preparing for and Decommissioning Winter Operations

Ontario Good Roads Association

A Guideline for Decommissioning Winter Operations

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Rationale

A municipality sets out in their winter operations plan the winter season dates based on local experience. However, there may be winter events pre and post winter season. This guideline suggests topics to be included in a winter operations plan for the preparations leading up to the winter season and decommissioning of winter operations at the end of the winter season.

Definitions

In this guideline:

Patroller.. means a person that is either a dedicated winter patroller or a person whose duties include winter patrolling.

Winter Event.. means a weather condition affecting roads such as snowfall, wind-blown snow, sleet, freezing rain, frost or ice, to which a winter event response is required.

Winter Event Response.. means a series of winter control activities performed in response to a winter event.

Winter Patrol. . means the field observation of weather and road conditions.

Winter Season.. means the season when the municipality normally performs winter highway maintenance

Prior to the Winter Season

Prior to the winter season, if required, prepare and call tenders for the supply of materials (salt, sand, liquid), replacement parts (for plows, solid and liquid application equipment), value added

meteorological services (VAMS) and contract equipment (plow trucks, spreader trucks, combination units, etc).

Prior to the winter season the municipality should consider:

1. Conducting a mandatory training session for staff and contract operators where all policies, procedures, schedules, reporting procedures for callout, route maps, equipment training and safety precautions should be discussed. Any issues resulting from the meeting with regard to the policies, procedures, schedules, reporting procedures for callout, route maps, equipment training and safety precautions should be resolved either at the meeting or prior to the winter season.
2. Training winter patrollers (or staff whose duties also include patrolling) on the route of representative roads to be patrolled, their duties during a winter event, record keeping requirements, callout procedures and the de-icing chemicals to be applied for the forecast weather conditions.
3. Inspecting equipment to ensure proper working order. Schedule and complete any and all equipment repairs.
4. Arranging for the delivery of materials (salt, sand and liquid solution) and begin filling storage facilities. If liquid solution is mixed on site, begin mixing and filling storage tanks.
5. Confirming that all guiderail, catchbasin, hazard and fire hydrant markers, steep hill, sharp curve ahead warning signs, bridges ices sign, if any, are in place. Any missing markers should be replaced prior to the winter session.

One Month Prior to the Winter Season

One month prior to the winter season the municipality should consider:

1. Posting the winter shift schedule in accordance with the municipality's collective agreement, if any.
2. Assigning equipment to staff.
3. Calibrating material application equipment.
4. Allowing operators (staff and contract) time to familiarize themselves with any new equipment, material application rates, material application equipment and their route (driving the route and noting obstacles along the route).
5. Assigning staff to monitor and record weather forecasts on a daily basis. Upon the forecast of an approaching winter event, schedule a patrol of a route of representative roads. If a winter event is forecast prior to the start of the next scheduled shift a night and/or weekend patrol(s) of a route of representative roads should be scheduled. If a night or weekend patrol is scheduled the patroller should monitor and record the weather forecast, actual weather observed and road conditions. The patrol person should be authorized to initiate a winter event response if conditions warrant a response.
6. Having a reasonable % of the fleet ready to respond to a winter event.
7. Having sufficient staff available to operate the fleet if conditions warrant a winter event response.

Two Weeks Prior to the Winter Season

Two weeks prior to the winter season the municipality should consider:

1. Having the required complement of the fleet ready to respond to a winter event.
2. Having staff available to operate the required complement of the fleet if conditions warrant a winter event response

At the Start of the Winter Season

At the start of the winter season:

1. Implement the winter shift schedule.
2. Respond to winter events as per the winter operations plan.

At the End of the Winter Season

At the end of the winter season the municipality should consider:

1. Ceasing the regular winter shift schedule.
2. Assigning staff to monitor and record weather forecasts on a daily basis. Upon the forecast of an approaching winter event, schedule a patrol of a route of representative roads. If a winter event is forecast prior to the start of the next scheduled shift a night and/or weekend patrol(s) of a route of representative roads should be scheduled. If a night or weekend patrol is scheduled the patroller should monitor and record the weather forecast, actual weather observed and road conditions. The patrol person should be authorized to initiate a winter event response if conditions warrant a response.
3. Having the required complement of the fleet ready to respond to a winter event.
4. Having staff available to operate the required complement of the fleet if conditions warrant a winter event response.

Two Weeks After the Winter Season Ends

Two weeks after the winter season ends:

1. Decommission reasonable % of the fleet.
2. Having sufficient staff available to operate the fleet if conditions warrant a winter event response.

One Month After the Winter Season Ends

One month after the winter season ends cease all winter highway maintenance operations and decommission the remainder of the equipment providing weather forecasts warrant the decommissioning.

Hold a meeting with all staff and contractors, if any, involved with winter operations to review any problems encountered during the winter season and any issues with policy, procedures, operations or the salt management plan. From the input received, policy and/or procedural changes should be made and forwarded to council, if required, for review and approval.

Limitations on Implementation

This procedure should be implemented at the end of a winter season in order for the municipality to make preparations for the next season. A training package for the mandatory training, required by this procedure, should need to be developed by the agency and staff and contractor sign-off sheets prepared to confirm training was received.

Winter Operations Reference Documents

1. A Guideline for Patrolling Representative Roads in Winter – OGRA 2012
2. A Guideline for Weather Monitoring – OGRA 2012
3. A Guideline for Training Patrol Staff – OGRA 2012
4. A Guideline for Developing a Level of Service Policy – OGRA 2012
5. Winter Operations Plan Template – OGRA 2012

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