

KEITH COUNTY Snow Removal Policy

SECTION 1, INTRODUCTION:

The Highway Department of Keith County is responsible for providing snow removal for approximately 800 miles of county roads. The Highway Department does not guarantee that county roads will be free of snow and ice after plowing. Bare, dry roads should not be expected during winter conditions. The Roads Department attempts to maintain adequate traction for vehicles **properly equipped** for winter driving conditions.

Planning for a winter storm is difficult. The differences in the rate of snowfall, moisture, content, temperature, time of day, and wind velocity make each storm unique.

However, it is the intent of this program to establish general policies and procedures to make travel within the County as safe as possible. Safety is the primary concern and all persons involved shall consider Safety first in their operating procedures.

The Keith County Highway Superintendent is responsible to format and implement this Snow Removal Policy with the input and approval of the Keith County Board of Commissioners.

SECTION 2, PREPARATION:

2.1 - The Keith County Highway Superintendent will evaluate the Highway Department's efforts from the previous winter. Any adjustments necessary to improve the overall Snow Removal Policy will be made.

2.2 - Fall preparation shall include a review of the equipment required to perform snow removal operations. This equipment shall be maintained in top operating condition while it is being used in other operations during the Spring, Summer, and Fall months.

2.3 - Fall preparation shall also include a meeting of all Keith County Highway Department Employees. This meeting shall be used to review equipment operations, safety issues, equipment maintenance, review the efforts from the previous winter, and review all Priority Snow Routes.

SECTION 3, CLASSIFICATION OF COUNTY ROADS:

3.1 - PRIORITY ONE.

The County Roads designated PRIORITY ONE includes all SCHOOL BUS ROUTES within the County as established by the School Districts and with the input of the County Board of Commissioners.

3.2 - PRIORITY TWO.

The County Roads designated as PRIORITY TWO include all MAIL ROUTES within the County as established by the area Postmasters and with the input of the County Board of Commissioners.

3.3 - PRIORITY THREE.

The County Roads designated as PRIORITY THREE include OTHER ROADS that have an occupied residence within the mile or a portion of a mile without School Bus Service and Mail Delivery Service. These miles are established by the County Highway Superintendent and with the input of the County Board of Commissioners.

3.4 - PRIORITY FOUR.

The County Roads designated as PRIORITY FOUR include all OTHER ROADS that have no occupied residence within the mile, except "Minimum Maintenance". These miles are established by the County Highway Superintendent and with the input of the County Board of Commissioners.

3.5 – PRIORITY FIVE.

The County Roads designated as PRIORITY FIVE include all “Minimum Maintenance”. These miles are established by the County Highway Superintendent and with the input of the County Board of Commissioners.

SECTION 4. LEVEL OF SERVICE:

4.1 - PRIORITY ONE COUNTY ROADS.

Plowing should begin on PRIORITY ONE County Roads when the accumulation of snow on the roadway exceeds three (3) inches. The roadway accumulation is generally independent of the total accumulation of snow in the area. PRIORITY ONE County Roads should be plowed road edge to road edge before or in conjunction with plowing other areas.

4.2 - PRIORITY TWO COUNTY ROADS.

Plowing of PRIORITY TWO County Roads should begin in conjunction with PRIORITY ONE County Roads. In some cases, PRIORITY TWO County Roads are also PRIORITY ONE County Roads and they will have already been plowed.

4.3 - PRIORITY THREE COUNTY ROADS.

Plowing operations should begin on these County Roads after the completion of plowing operations on all PRIORITY ONE and PRIORITY TWO County Roads if they were not done in conjunction with the plowing of PRIORITY ONE and PRIORITY TWO county roads. If snow continues, plowing operations may have to be redirected to PRIORITY ONE and PRIORITY TWO County Roads before the completion of plowing operations on PRIORITY THREE County Roads. At times PRIORITY THREE County Roads will be plowed in conjunction with PRIORITY ONE AND PRIORITY TWO county roads.

4.4 - PRIORITY FOUR COUNTY ROADS.

PRIORITY FOUR County Roads will be plowed but may be plowed after PRIORITY ONE, PRIORITY TWO, and PRIORITY THREE county roads have been plowed. Plowing of PRIORITY FOUR county roads for access to livestock **will not** take priority over PRIORITY ONE, PRIORITY TWO, and PRIORITY THREE county roads.

4.5 - PRIORITY FIVE COUNTY ROADS.

PRIORITY FIVE County Roads will **not** be plowed unless directed by the County Highway Superintendent.

SECTION 5. SNOW REMOVAL PERSONNEL:

5.1 - Snow removal operations will **generally** be conducted between the hours of 5:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m., seven days a week as needed. Equipment operators and supervisors should also be ready to commence snow removal operations at any time it is determined that operations must begin. The Keith County Highway Superintendent shall decide when to call snow removal personnel to work and how long they shall work.

5.2 - Primary responsibility for snow removal planning, operation direction, and snow fighting decision-making will be that of the Keith County Highway Superintendent with the assistance of the Keith County Highway Foremen. There will always be one (1) person at a time in charge of operations and that person will have all authority and responsibility to conduct snow-plowing operations as outlined in this policy.

5.3 - If the decision to commence snow removal operations is made during the normal work day, operators and supervisors shall be prepared to cease the activities they are engaged in and begin snow removal preparations and operations.

5.4 - If the conditions become such that snow removal must begin after normal working hours, the Highway Superintendent will notify the necessary number of operators to man the operations.

5.5 – Meal breaks will be taken at the discretion of the employees. Employees will normally be limited to a maximum of 12 hours of continuous snow plowing. This is in consideration of the safety of the operator, the public, and liability exposure to the County. Employees may be requested to work longer than 12 hours during a SNOW EMERGENCY.

5.6 - Cooperation and communication between the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) and the Keith County Roads Department is critical during a winter storm. There will be close contact between the two departments during snow emergencies.

SECTION 6. SNOW PLOWING OPERATIONS:

6.1 - There are several factors to consider when deciding whether snow-plowing operations should commence. The general rule to be used, however, is when accumulations have reached three (3) inches on the road surface itself and snow is falling or the forecast predicts additional snowfall, operations should commence at the discretion of the Highway Superintendent. Snow plowing operations may not commence, or may cease, because of high winds or blowing snow.

6.2 - Every County Road in the County will be assigned a plowing priority classification. In any given area, PRIORITY ONE County Roads will be plowed before or in conjunction with PRIORITY TWO or THREE County Roads. If operations have begun and it continues to snow with sufficient additional accumulation to require re-plowing, then PRIORITY ONE County Roads will be re-plowed before or in conjunction with plowing operations on PRIORITY TWO or THREE County Roads.

6.3 - All supervisors and equipment operators are expected to know the areas they are assigned to plow.

6.4 - Equipment operators are responsible for their equipment and shall inspect this equipment prior to beginning plowing operations to ensure it is in proper working order. All malfunctions must be reported to the Foreman. When a vehicle is out of service the supervisor may make vehicle reassignments in order to plow other areas.

6.5 - Fueling of equipment will occur at the end of each shift to prepare for the next shift's operation. In the event fueling becomes necessary before the end of the shift, fuel can be hauled to the site by county workers.

6.6 - Equipment operators shall obey ALL traffic laws during snow plowing operations.

6.7 - If an employee of the Keith County Highway Department comes upon an abandoned vehicle during snow plowing operations, they shall contact the Highway Superintendent. The Highway Superintendent, with the assistance of EOC, will try to locate the owner of such abandoned vehicle to get it moved. If an emergency exists, the Highway Superintendent may instruct the employee to remove the vehicle by using the best method available. The County will not assume any responsibility for the removal of an abandoned vehicle.

6.8 - If an employee comes upon a stuck vehicle with occupants and the employee is asked to assist in removing the stuck vehicle, the employee shall contact the Highway for instructions. The Highway Superintendent shall instruct the employee as to what procedure they may take to remove the stuck vehicle. No County Employee shall hook a chain or tow strap/cable to a vehicle without the authorization of the Highway Superintendent unless it is a life-threatening situation. The employee shall have the occupant of the stuck vehicle sign a waiver before hooking and towing begin. The County is not obligated to assist in any removal of a stuck vehicle especially on a closed road.

6.9 - Operators who are involved in an accident are required to report the accident immediately to the Highway Superintendent. Should such an accident be an emergency, the employee involved in the accident may contact the Sheriff's office directly. Operators must also complete an accident report and submit it to their supervisor before the end of their shift.

SECTION 7. ADJACENT DRIVEWAYS AND COUNTY ROADS:

The cleaning of adjacent driveways and subdivision roads to County Roads is the responsibility of the adjacent property owner(s). When plowing snow, several passes are sometimes necessary before a County Road is clear. Every effort is made to prevent plowing snow into driveways, however, the Highway Department will not clean driveways adjacent to County Roads. Cleaning driveways that are plowed in by the Highway Department plows is the responsibility of the adjacent property owner. It is generally best to open driveways AFTER the snowplows have completed their operations. Keith County Highway Department shall not clear other County Roads without the permission of the Highway Superintendent or without having an Inter-Local agreement with said County. In the event of an emergency the Keith County Highway Superintendent may give permission to clear a County Road without said Inter-local Agreement.

SECTION 8. SNOW REMOVAL PROGRAM AND SNOW ROUTE MAPS:

A copy of this Snow Removal Program and Policy and Maps indicating all PRIORITY ONE, PRIORITY TWO, PRIORITY THREE, and PRIORITY FOUR County Roads will be kept at the Keith County Roads Department.

SECTION 9. CITIZEN COOPERATION:

9.1 - In order to achieve the best possible result and in the most efficient manner from the Keith County Highway Department's snow removal operations, all citizens of Keith County are requested to cooperate fully with the Highway Department. During SNOW EMERGENCIES and winter storm conditions, all residents are asked to not have parked vehicles/equipment on County Roads. This will allow snow plows an opportunity to clear the County Roads quicker and with fewer passes, saving both time and money.

9.2 - Operating a snowplow can be a frustrating and scary task. When ice creates treacherous driving conditions and high winds blow snow into the driver's view, the snowplows require tremendous skill and courage to operate.

These conditions or motorists driving too quickly can force the snowplow from the road. Motorists driving too fast for conditions can lose control, compromising the driver's safety. This is tragic not only to the driver but to those on the route whose road plowing must be delayed. Motorists should always allow plenty of space near the snowplows and avoid passing whenever possible.

9.3 - As outlined under SECTION 6. SNOW PLOWING OPERATIONS, 6.7, if a Keith County Employee while they are plowing snow comes upon an abandoned vehicle that is blocking a county road and must be moved, all attempts will be made to locate the owner to get the vehicle removed. If the owner cannot be located and the vehicle **must** be removed, steps will be taken to move the vehicle. Keith County or the employees of Keith County cannot be held liable for damages caused by removing the abandoned vehicle.

9.4 - As outlined under SECTION 6. SNOW PLOWING OPERATIONS, 6.8, if a Keith County Employee, while they are plowing snow, comes upon a stuck vehicle with occupants that is blocking a county road and is asked to assist the owner in removing the stuck vehicle and is instructed by the Highway Superintendent to assist, the owner of the stuck vehicle shall make the hookup of the chain or tow strap/cable to their vehicle. Keith County or the employees of Keith County cannot be held liable for damages caused by assisting a stuck vehicle. Keith County has no obligation to assist stuck or abandoned vehicles and people.

SECTION 10. DEPARTURE FROM POLICY:

Keith County acknowledges the policies as set forth in this program are of a general nature and recognizes conditions may be so unusual or unexpected that a departure from this general program may need to be authorized. When conditions warrant, the Keith County Highway Superintendent may order a departure from these general policies when conditions are such that the departure from this policy is necessary and warranted for the health, safety, and welfare of the citizens of Keith County. The Keith County Highway Superintendent or his designee is authorized to publicly announce that non-emergency travel is not recommended when conditions warrant such a warning.

SECTION 11. MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS:

This policy is not, nor is it intended to encompass all details of Keith County's snow removal and control operations.

SECTION 12. POLICY PRIORITY:

To the extent that any previous rule, regulation, policy, or past practice, written or unwritten is in conflict with the provisions of this policy, such is hereby withdrawn and voided and all personnel shall conduct themselves in conformity with this policy.

SECTION 13. EMERGENCY CONTACTS:

- Keith County Roads Department 308-284-6601
- Keith County Highway Superintendent 308-289-0797
- Keith County Emergency Operation Center 308-284-2011

Keith County

Waiver for Removing Stuck Vehicles

Understanding that removal of my vehicle from its present stuck condition could result in damage to my vehicle, I hereby waive, release, and hold harmless the County of Keith, its officers, agents, and employees from all actions, causes of action, damages, claims or demands which I or my executors, administrators, or assigns may have against the County of Keith, its officers, agents, and employees for any harm or injury, known or unknown, which they may have or may incur as a result of the removal of my vehicle from its present stuck condition, gross negligence excepted. I have read this waiver, release, hold harmless and indemnification agreement and understand its terms and execute this agreement voluntarily and with full knowledge of its significance.

_____ Signature

_____ Print name

_____ Address

_____ Date

_____ County Employee Signature