



NYC sanitation

Snow Operations FAQs

DSNY is responsible for snow removal from the City's 19,000 lane miles of roadways. In preparation for snow, DSNY personnel begin equipment readiness, including loading salt spreaders, attaching plows, preparing tire chains and notifying supplementary personnel.

When do salt spreaders start working?

Salt spreaders are our first line of defense. Many salt spreaders are repositioned before the storm starts. They spread a mix of rock salt and calcium chloride when a trace amount of snow, or other frozen precipitation, has fallen.

Does DSNY pre-treat streets with salt?

No, DSNY does not find this effective as vehicles riding over dry salt will kick it up, moving it from the center of the street where it is needed.

When are snow plows used? How do they work?

Plows may be repositioned before the start of a storm. Snow plows are sent out once 2-inches of snow has accumulated. The plow blade on DSNY trucks is set slightly off the ground so the plow will not "trip" on uneven streets or manhole covers. Plows are not designed to scrape the street to blacktop. Remember, a street can be plowed even though it will not show blacktop. This is to be expected. A combined approach of salting roadways and using plows is most effective in heavy snowfall.

Who is responsible for cleaning snow and ice from the sidewalk?

Owners, lessees, tenants, or other occupants are responsible for cleaning snow and ice from sidewalks. Snow and ice should NOT be pushed in to the street or cover crosswalks. Try to clear a 3-4 foot path. Corner properties should clear a path to the crosswalk, including pedestrian ramps. Those who do not comply can face fines. If possible, consider assisting elderly or disabled neighbors.



Why does temperature matter?

Rock salt begins to lose effectiveness once temperatures dip below 24 degrees Fahrenheit, and the addition of calcium chloride increases salt's effectiveness at lower temperatures. Residents must be mindful that when temperatures dip, snow and ice removal will take more time.

Why do plows push snow to the right?

On two-lane streets, we must plow to the right to avoid blocking the oncoming left lane with snow. On one-way streets, we must plow to the right because accumulated snow on the left side would make left turns at intersections impossible.

In what order are streets plowed?

DSNY prioritizes its resources by first clearing primary arteries, such as expressways; bus routes, hospital and school roads and other critical roadways to facilitate the movement of fire trucks, ambulances, and police and other emergency vehicles. Then, secondary roads, such as heavily traveled streets are treated, followed by tertiary routes, which are predominantly side streets.

New this year, certain areas of the city snow routes have been redesigned with designations as either critical or sector routes. New routes will be used in Staten Island, Manhattan, Bronx CB6, Queens CB6, and Brooklyn CB8.

How can salt spreaders and plows be tracked?

New Yorkers can view PlowNYC at maps.nyc.gov/snow to determine what type of street they live on (primary, secondary or tertiary) and to see the approximate time that has elapsed since a DSNY salt spreader or plow has worked on their street. Please note that weather conditions, construction projects, closures, or other events may cause actual conditions to differ from the data presented. In addition, the maps may contain inaccuracies due to variations in signal strength and the AVL system.

When will garbage and recycling be picked up when it's snowing?

Garbage and recycling collection may be delayed or suspended, depending on the intensity of the storm. This information will be available via 311, the DSNY website, or on social media outlets.