

## What's in a Snow Plan Brochure and how's your Snow Plan?

Although there is no right or wrong way to develop a municipal snow plan brochure, there are several issues towns should consider as they try to develop one.

- 1) Brief letter or note addressing the public and signed by the Public Works Director or person responsible for managing the highway department.
- 2) Explain the various stages of storms and how the municipality responds.
  - a. When the Storm starts. This is where "priority" is explained, as roads with higher traffic demands faster response. If using an "Anti-icing" program, municipalities can include information on the benefits of getting out early and applying salt versus more sand.
  - b. When the Snowfall Continues. Mention how plowing becomes the way to maintain road conditions. It is also worth mentioning how each storm is different and requires different strategies (depending on, temperature, time of day, traffic conditions, rate of snowfall, and texture of snow). Towns can also explain how various winter conditions affect roads, such as flooding, tree and power line problems.
  - c. Snow Removal. Explain what and when is taken care of during snow removal.
- 3) Include information on "everything else" departments do for winter road maintenance. Some of these duties might include:
  - a. Plowing sidewalks
  - b. "Free Sand" policy for residents
  - c. Clearing catch basins
  - d. Plowing public parking lots
  - e. Filling potholes
  - f. Maintaining and Calibrating Vehicles and equipment
- 4) General Information on Winter Storm Operations. Explain the overall way a storm is handled. For instance, how many passes are made in each direction? Or how many passes could be made? How long after the storm does the town work? What is the number of trucks and how many miles are maintained?
- 5) Explain the role of the public. Provide bullet statements explaining how residents should prepare for traveling on winter roads. These could include, how to:
  - a. Be mindful of parking ban.
  - b. Drive defensively with plenty of room when following others on the road, especially the snow plow !!
  - c. Timing and tips on plowing/shoveling private driveways
  - d. How not to plow snow into town roads
  - e. Understand mailbox policy.
  - f. When best to contact garage.
  - g. Mention how bridges freeze first!

h. Why municipality does not plow private roads or driveways.

i. Whether residents are required to shovel sidewalks or not.

The suggestions just mentioned were listed based on reading the City of Lewiston, Maine's Winter Storms brochure (with just a few additional ideas). Municipalities, such as Hallowell, have used an 8.5"x14" size paper and folded into four sections to display all that is needed. To help guide a town through the process, look at samples and see what's already being used for ideas.

Why is it a good idea to produce a brochure? It is better to be proactive than reactive! Communication is never a bad thing and can only help "set the record straight" when dealing on a very important issue at the local level.

In addition to mailing this brochure to all property owners, a municipality should consider all other methods possible on communicating important information to the public. For example, is there a plan to contact various media in the event a road is closed or other route recommended during a bad storm? Can you put this info on the Town's website? Is there a person designated in the department to handle contact with residents or media? Who will contact who when the power company or fire department needs to be reached due to an accident or downed power lines? Did the town place an ad in the local newspaper regarding the parking ban, so nobody can say "they weren't warned"? With the snow flying fast, it is a good idea to plan ahead!

Understanding Politics. Sometimes a Selectboard doesn't understand why certain trucks are used on particular routes. For example, why is the one ton used more in a village area versus a more heavy duty dump truck? It is a good idea to have a color-coded (or easy to read) street map that displays who (and which truck) is covering certain roads during storms. Once a plow route becomes visible, it becomes easier to understand by others. It is also a good exercise to verify the right trucks being used for the corresponding roads. If there are turnaround easement problems, that would be a great time to discuss as well.