



Mariposa County Department of Public Works

Snow Removal Policy

A. PURPOSE

The Mariposa County Public Works Department has developed this Snow Removal Policy to safeguard the public health, safety, and general welfare by prohibiting parking of vehicles on public highways, roads, and streets in certain areas of the county to permit effective and speedy removal of snow by Mariposa County staff, the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) or other persons engaged, hired, contracted, or otherwise authorized to remove snow from public highways.

Parking restrictions in the county right-of-way during snow removal season are strictly enforced; your vehicle **will be towed**. The county shall not assume liability for any damage caused to vehicles left in the county right-of-way during snow removal operations.

B. SCOPE

This document encompasses the procedures and regulations governing prioritization for Mariposa County Road Services, as well as the protocols for chain controls, snow removal operations, and parking restrictions. It provides a comprehensive framework for the maintenance of county roadways, outlining prioritization criteria based on traffic volume, population density, and support for emergency agency response, ensuring a structured and efficient approach to handling snow-related challenges in Mariposa County.

C. DEFINITIONS

1. "Bare Pavement Condition" - a state in which a road or surface has been cleared of all snow and ice, leaving the underlying pavement visible and free from any significant accumulation of snow and ice.
2. "Snow Removal Condition" – the accumulation or potential accumulation of three (3) or more inches of snow, which requires proactive measures to clear the snow from roadways and other affected areas. This condition remains in effect until the roadways and other affected areas have been adequately cleared to ensure safe passage for regular traffic.
3. "Tire Traction Device" – devices or mechanisms having a composition and design capable of improving vehicle traction, braking, and cornering ability upon snow and ice-covered surfaces.

D. CHAIN CONTROLS

1. **California Vehicle Code Section 27459 - Tire Traction Devices**

No person shall operate any motor vehicle, trailer, or semitrailer upon any portion of a highway without tire traction devices when that portion of the highway is signed for the requirement of tire traction devices.

2. There are Three Levels of Chain Requirements in California:

- a. **Requirement 1 (R-1):** Chains are required on all vehicles **except passenger vehicles and light-duty trucks under 6,000 pounds gross weight and equipped with snow tires on at least two drive wheels**. Chains must be carried by vehicles using snow tires. All vehicles towing trailers must have chains on one drive axle. Trailers with brakes must have chains on at least one axle.
 - b. **Requirement 2 (R-2):** Chains or traction devices are required on all vehicles **except four-wheel/all-wheel drive vehicles with snow-tread tires on all four wheels**.
 - c. **Requirement 3 (R-3):** Chains or traction devices are required on **all** vehicles, no exceptions.
3. In all areas where chain control signs are posted, the speed limit is set at 25 MPH or a lower speed that is deemed safe for the prevailing road conditions.



R-1



R-2



R-3

E. PRIORITIZATION FOR COUNTY ROAD SERVICES

1. The Mariposa County Public Works Roads Division is responsible for maintaining 560+ miles of county roadways. Snow removal services on roads maintained by the county are carried out through a collaboration between Mariposa County personnel and contracted service providers. County staff is not available for snow removal services on private roads. Residents living along private roads are accountable for organizing their own snow removal efforts. In rare situations, county resources may be mobilized on private roads to assist emergency personnel, but solely at their request and subject to the approval of the Roads & Bridges Manager.

2. County roads are prioritized based on traffic volume, population density, and support for emergency agency response.

3. **Priority 1 Roads**

Paved roads that provide the main access for communities to the State Highway System, county roads that access fire stations, paramedics, and Mariposa County Sheriff Offices. These roads will generally receive snow removal resources first and more frequently than subordinate road classifications, and it is Public Works' goal to keep them open continuously. While roads in this classification may close temporarily for public safety reasons, they will typically be the first to be re-opened.

4. **Priority 2 Roads**

Paved roads that serve communities and government offices but carry less traffic than Priority 1 Roads. These are the second priority to receive snow removal resources.

5. **Priority 3 Roads**

Residential streets, subdivisions, cul-de-sacs, and other paved roads within communities. As the third priority designation, these roads generally receive snow removal as soon as all the Priority 1 and Priority 2 roads have been cleared and opened.

6. **Priority 4 Roads**

Remote roads serving single residences and maintained dirt roads have the last priority as they require special equipment to remove the snow.

7. **Roads Not Maintained During Winter Months**

Certain roads in Mariposa County receive no maintenance throughout the winter months and are clearly marked with yellow and black signs that read, "NOT MAINTAINED DURING WINTER NOV-MAY." These specific roads are rigorously left untouched and unplowed during the winter season. Attached as Exhibit 1 is a list of roads not maintained during winter months.

F. SNOW REMOVAL OPERATIONS

1. The Mariposa County Public Works Roads Division oversees the maintenance of over 560 miles of county roadways. Information regarding road closures and chain control for these maintained roadways can be accessed on the Mariposa County website at <https://mariposacounty.org>

2. Caltrans performs snow removal services on state highways/routes such as SR 140, SR 120, SR 132, SR 41, and SR 49. Check current highway conditions on the internet: <https://roads.dot.ca.gov/>

3. Given existing resources, the Mariposa County Roads Division is equipped to effectively manage most snowstorms occurring above an elevation of 3,500 feet, assuming there are minimal concerns at lower elevations like downed trees and flooding.

4. Resource constraints do not permit a "bare pavement condition" snow removal policy.

5. Normal snow and ice control operations are performed during an 8-to-14-hour shift.
6. Snow removal operations will begin when snow depths on the pavement accumulate to three (3) inches during regular work shifts.
7. In the event of snowfall occurring outside of regular work hours, snow removal operations will commence during the subsequent shift, unless the roads become impassable or pose a risk due to hazardous conditions.
8. During snowplow operations, a snow berm will be formed in front of driveways, and it is the resident's responsibility to clear it.
 - a. Do not shovel or blow snow back into the roadway as this is illegal and you could be cited or expose yourself to liability if an accident or property damage occurs.
 - b. Snow that is shoveled or blown back into the roadway will be returned onto the driveway during the next pass of the snowplow.
 - c. Parking vehicles as close to the road as possible at the end of driveways does not reduce snow accumulation and increases the risk of vehicle damage.
9. Each piece of snow removal equipment has an assigned route. Operators will begin plowing from the initial point of their assigned area, continue until they reach the conclusion of that section, and then return to the starting point to resume plowing.
10. As the snow accumulates, plowing endeavors can create snowbanks encroaching onto the roadway, limiting the available travel space. To increase the available travel space, operators will continue plowing, pushing snow onto the road shoulders (which extend ten feet from the edge of the pavement for snow storage purposes), turnouts, and parking areas.
11. Mariposa County opts not to use salt for de-icing to safeguard the environment and prevent potential corrosion to infrastructure.
12. Roads will be sanded as needed after the snowfall has ceased. Please remember, sand is not a substitute for tire traction devices and does not guarantee traction for tires.

****NOTE****

Mariposa County does NOT sand R-2 conditions unless an emergency exists and the Roads & Bridges Manager authorizes it.

13. Efforts to scrape ice under freezing conditions have been unsuccessful and tend to smooth the surface, increasing slipperiness. Standard ice removal procedures will be implemented once the ice has partially thawed.
14. If conditions such as extended heavy snowfall, low elevation snowfall, reduced equipment availability, lack of personnel or major problems elsewhere to the county-maintained road system are present, a request for a declaration of a "storm emergency" may be made by the Director of Public Works in accordance with Chapter 2.80 of the Mariposa County Code. When a storm emergency is declared, snow removal operations may be prioritized to assist emergency responders.

G. PARKING RESTRICTIONS

1. Mariposa County Code Section 10.08.110 “Snow Removal—Parking Restricted” prohibits parking on the pavement or road shoulder during snow removal operations.
2. In the areas of the county above an elevation of twenty-five hundred (2500) feet, no person shall park any vehicle on a county-maintained public road, highway, or right-of-way, which is posted with signs stating that no person shall stop, park, or leave standing any vehicle within the areas marked by the signs, during the period for which a “snow removal condition” exists.
3. Any additional items, such as basketball hoops, wood splitters, trash bins, construction materials, and trailers, must be cleared from a county-maintained public road, highway, or right-of-way for the duration of a "snow removal condition."
4. If vehicles or other obstructions on the roadway pose a safety risk to snowplow operations, the road may be left unattended until the responsible party addresses the safety concern.
5. A warning sticker will be affixed to the vehicle window or residence door of the responsible party for violations of this policy. An illustrative sticker is provided as Exhibit 2.

H. HELPFUL TIPS

1. Please keep children and pets from playing on or near roads and snow berms as this is very dangerous. Due to limited visibility and road conditions during winter storms, drivers may not see them or be able to stop in time to avoid hitting them.
2. Plan ahead and don't travel unless necessary. Carry a survival kit consisting of blankets or sleeping bags, water, and a flashlight in case of vehicle breakdown or becoming stuck in the snow.
3. Always carry tire traction devices and know how to apply them to your vehicle.
4. Do not shovel or push snow from driveways into the roadway, as this creates a hazard for other drivers, a liability for you, and is illegal.
5. Exercise caution around snowplows, as they often make frequent stops and backup maneuvers, sometimes with limited visibility. Avoid driving directly behind a snowplow, as the driver may not be able to see you and could inadvertently back into your vehicle. If you are behind a plow that stops, stop your vehicle in such a way that you can see the snowplow driver's eyes, and please give them extra room.

I. CONTACT INFORMATION

The Department of Public Works office is open Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and can be reached at (209) 966-5356; the Public Works counter at 4639 Ben Hur Road is open to the public Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. In the event of an emergency, weekends, evenings, or holidays, please contact the Sheriff's Office at (209) 966-3615 or 911, who will then dispatch the appropriate Public Works Road Supervisor.

EXHIBIT 1

Not Maintained During Winter Months **November 1st Through May 31st**

NORTH AREA:

Bondurant Road

At the intersection of Dogtown Road.

Cuneo

From Jackass Creek Access Road to Priest Coulterville Road.

Dogtown

Approximately ½ mile east of Bondurant Road to Greeley Hill Road.

Old Yosemite

Approximately 4 miles east of Bull Creek Road.

Schilling

From the End of pavement in Greeley Hill to SR49

Texas Hill

At the intersection of Quail Mine Road

EAST AREA:

Chowchilla Mountain Road (Harris Cutoff-Basin)

At Harris Cutoff Road to end of pavement Chowchilla Mountain Road (Basin side).

Chowchilla Mountain Road (Last residence on dirt portion)

Dirt Portion (above Basin) at 6185 Chowchilla Mountain (last residence) to Summit Road intersection.

Summit Road

Chowchilla Mountain Road to the community of Fish Camp at Egan's way.

Miami Mountain

SR41 to Worman Road.

Foresta Road

From the intersection of Foresta Road and Dana Way to El Portal (Road is impassible due to two bridge failures also has locked gate).

Oak Road

Yosemite Oak Road to just west of the address 5222/5267.

Slaughterhouse Road

SR140 to All Red Road.

WEST AREA:

Cotton Creek Road

Bear Valley Road to Hunters Valley Road.

Indian Gulch Extension

End of Waltz Road (Merced County) JWO Santa Cruz Cemetery.

Spur Road

County Line at SR140

EXHIBIT 2

WARNING

Mariposa County Ordinance 10.08.110 “Snow Removal—Parking Restricted”

In the areas of the county above the elevation of twenty-five hundred (2500) feet, no person shall park any vehicle on a county-owned public road, highway, or right-of-way, which is posted with signs stating that no person shall stop, park or leave standing any vehicle within the areas marked by the signs, during the period for which the road commissioner has declared a “snow removal condition” exists.

**VEHICLES LEFT PARKED ON THE PAVEMENT OR SHOULDER WILL BE TOWED AND
STORED AT THE OWNER'S EXPENSE!**