Street Parking

The City urges everyone to voluntarily move vehicles off the street when it snows. Plow drivers say that cars parked on the street are the biggest hazard they face, and can cause major delays in snow fighting. Priority streets require no parking during snow events of 2 inches or more. Parking Utility staff do their best to warn drivers to move their vehicles, but if all else fails these obstructing vehicles will be ticketed and towed at the owner’s expense. To help the plow drivers, please sign up for Nixle to be alerted when it’s time to move your vehicles off of priority routes. Text COLUMBIAPW to 888777 or visit Nixle.com.

Bus Service

Service will continue during snow unless a cancellation is announced. Download the Go COMO app at GoCOMOTransit.com or follow on social media (@GoCOMO) for updates. For questions about Paratransit service, call 573-874-2489 or email PTScheduling@GoColumbiaMo.com.

Sidewalks

Per City ordinance, sidewalks are the responsibility of property owners. For information about volunteer assistance, contact Community Development at 573-874-2489.
Waking up to a winter weather event is a challenge for everyone. There’s not a single person in the City of Columbia who is not affected in some way. Some of us need to know if our office or school is closed or open. Others of us need to know if we can get to our local shopping or medical facilities. Can we call in late or reschedule our appointments? Hopefully we saw the forecast on our favorite local channel the night before and set our alarms an hour or two earlier.

If we absolutely must go out, how do we get to where we’re going? Are the buses running? What about paratransit? Are we able to get our vehicle to the nearest priority route? Has it been plowed yet? How do we dig our cars out if we parked them on the street? Are our tires fitted with snow chains? What about our driveway and sidewalks?

Missouri winters can be unpredictable from year to year and are challenging for even the most prepared. The morning brings a lot of questions that must be answered quickly. The City’s award-winning snow and ice operations and policies are designed to get the community through the worst part of winter in the most effective way possible.

**Passable Roads**

Although a street may still be snow packed, if at least one lane is accessible for front-wheel-drive vehicles driving at slow speeds, the road is considered passable. To literally “clear” the street until the pavement can be seen from curb to curb would require so many passes by the plows on a single street that it would greatly delay reaching as many streets as possible.

**Priority Routes**

The City of Columbia is 65.51 square miles with more than 1,100 cul-de-sacs and 1,300 lane miles of streets maintained by Public Works. During winter events, this includes 466 lane miles of first and second priority routes. These priority routes are a network of arterials, collector roads and residential streets that extend throughout the City towards as many neighborhoods as possible. They include Battle Avenue, Worley Street and Thornbrook Terrace. Their primary purpose is to ensure safe passageways to and from area hospitals, schools, fire stations and commercial areas. A full list of priority routes is available online at CoMoSnow.com.

**Neighborhoods**

The sheer volume of cul-de-sacs and lane miles makes it necessary to prioritize roads. Still, there are clear policies that guide winter operations staff in determining when equipment and personnel will be diverted away from these critical routes. If a snowfall is less than 4 inches, crews focus on priority routes during normal business hours before going into neighborhoods. If the snow exceeds 4 inches, crews will work around the clock to treat and plow every street in the City, beginning with priority routes, until they are deemed passable by snow inspectors.

**Snow Responders**

The City’s go-to snow fighting team are the 44 members of the Street Division plus personnel and resources from throughout the City. In an all-hands-on-deck approach, City staff manage the fleet, communicate with the public, monitor weather and pavement temperatures, and adjust to changing conditions. The heavy lifting is done by the plow drivers who spend 8- to 12-hour shifts behind the wheel in hazardous conditions. In heavy storms, plow drivers sleep on cots and work in shifts to address roads around the clock. City dump trucks serve a dual role as snow fighting equipment by fitting them with removable plows, salt spreaders and brine delivery equipment. The Street Division includes 22 dump trucks and 14 one-ton pickups but other City departments are ready to lend their vehicles when the need arises.