

What property owners need to know about sidewalk snow removal

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Twenty-two hundred miles of sidewalks exist in the City of Colorado Springs' limits. Cleared sidewalks provide a safer way for non-drivers in our community, such as children, the disabled and senior citizens, to get around. And, during poor driving conditions sidewalks may serve as a primary means of travel for almost everyone.

Therefore, City ordinance requires property owners to clear the snow from all adjacent sidewalks and pedestrian ramps including sidewalks running along the rear or side of a property line or fence. Residential properties should have sidewalks cleared within 24 hours after a snow storm has ended. Commercial properties should have sidewalks cleared by 5 p.m. the following business day.

During the peak month and a half snow season last year, the City received more than 400 complaints, many reporting multiple locations, regarding sidewalks needing to be cleared. This year, City staff are taking a proactive inspection approach and will monitor areas within three blocks of the City's 135 schools and five hospitals. Also, new this year will be greater follow-up after inspections.

Ordinance violators will receive a first notice of the need to clear snow from adjacent sidewalks. Twenty-four hours later City staff will check back. If the sidewalk hasn't been cleared, violators will receive a final notice. If 24 hours after receiving the final notice the sidewalk still hasn't been cleared, City staff will have a private contractor clear the sidewalk. The City will then bill the property owner for the cost of the snow removal service as well as inspection and related administrative costs. If left unpaid, the City reserves the right to place a lien against the property for the due amount under current codes. To report a sidewalk that needs to be addressed, call 719-385-5977.

Property owners should also be aware they may be held civilly liable for injury claims resulting from an un-cleared sidewalk.

The City of Colorado Springs Street Division is responsible for clearing sidewalks on bridges. The City of Colorado Springs Parks Maintenance Division is responsible for clearing snow in City parks, crosswalks on downtown medians and specific urban commuter trails. The Park Maintenance Division's Special Improvement Maintenance District (SIMD) is responsible for clearing snow on specific crosswalks and sidewalks in the Briargate, Norwood, Stetson Hills, Woodstone and Old Colorado City special improvement districts.

For more information on sidewalk snow removal, visit <http://www.SpringsGov.com/snow>.

Tips for snow removal:

~Be prepared. Have a lightweight, sturdy and ergonomically correct snow shovel pre-purchased and ready to go or check that your snow blower is working. Pre-purchase de-icer (if you have pets, think about a de-icer friendly to pet paws). Consider contracting with a local company to provide snow removal service (be sure to get several estimates, ask about additional charges, check references and have a written agreement).

~As soon as snow begins to stick, spread de-icer to help slow the freezing process. Sweep up remaining de-icer once the area is dry to prevent damage to the concrete (it can also be re-used.)

~If the sun has begun to melt the snow, be sure to clear your sidewalk before night temperatures have a chance to freeze solid any remaining snow.

~To avoid injury, wear shoes or boots with good tread, lift with your leg muscles keeping your back straight, scoop lighter loads of snow rather than a heavily packed shovel, avoid twisting the back – instead pivot the whole body, and walk to where you are depositing the

snow rather than reaching or tossing it.

~Shovel snow onto your lawn rather than into public streets to avoid having the snow end up back on the sidewalk once a snowplow clears the street.

~Take frequent breaks to rest and check for frostbite.

~If you are unable to remove a patch of ice, crack it with an ice chisel or heavy-duty scraping tool to expose the surface to the air and help accelerate the melting process.

Birdseed can also be used as an environmentally friendly traction material.

~Consider your neighbors and whether they are elderly or disabled and may need assistance.