

City of East Lansing One Pager Plus

Snow Removal FAQs

What are the City's requirements for removing snow/ice?

Section 38-127 of Chapter 38 (Ordinance 1326) of the City Code provides a time frame for property owners to clear the snow/ice on the sidewalks adjacent to their property after a major snow event. Snow that accumulates **before noon** on a sidewalk must be cleared by midnight the same day and snow that accumulates **after noon** on a sidewalk must be cleared by midnight of the following day. For snow showers that occur on more than one consecutive day, snow must be cleared by the above stated times or within 48 hours after the first snowfall began, whichever is sooner. Ice should be cleared or an abrasive (salt, sand, etc.) should be applied within 12 hours of formation.

Each day that an owner fails to maintain a sidewalk in accordance with these standards constitutes a separate offense. Failure to timely comply constitutes a public nuisance and the City Manager may—if he or she determines the condition endangers the health, safety, or welfare of the public—cause to be posted on the property a notice of the intent of the City to abate the condition with the costs of the abatement assessed to the property owner in accordance with Section 26-4 of the code. The City may abate the condition and assess the property owner the costs if the condition is not remedied in accordance with the above standards within 24 hours of the abatement notice.

What about people who are physically not able to clear sidewalks adjacent to their property?

Cases in which there are hardships may be considered by the City Attorney's office, should a ticket be issued. Ideally, neighbors will provide assistance to those who are unable to keep their adjacent sidewalks free of snow and ice. There are also services offered to seniors which are listed online at www.cityofeastlansing.com/Home/Departments/PrimeTimeSeniorsProgram/CommunityResources/.

The code does not include a warning component—it seems only fair to provide at least one warning.

Neither a warning nor the appeal process is expressly addressed in the code. Three options are listed on the citation: admit and pay; admit with a written explanation; or deny responsibility. For further information, please contact the 54B District Court at (517) 351-4568.

If ticketed, what are the fines?

Currently, the 54B District Court assesses \$85 in fines and costs. Please note, fines and costs are determined, in part, by legislative requirements. Contact the 54B District Court at (517) 351-4568 for updated information.



Snow Removal Ordinance (Continued)

Are there instances where the code does not apply (e.g. if I live on a school route)?

The City clears sidewalks in some higher-volume pedestrian traffic areas including downtown and around schools. Even if the City does this, you are **still responsible** for making sure the sidewalk next to your property is maintained and clear enough for everyone to use, including those in wheelchairs.

Can I still be ticketed for failure to remove snow and ice even if I am on vacation or on winter break from school?

Vacations or other planned absences **do not** absolve residents of snow/ice removal responsibility, so arrangements should be made. Should an unexpected or unplanned absence occur, the Office of the City Attorney will consider the circumstances and make adjustments accordingly.

Why do City plows push snow into my driveway? Who is responsible for clearing it?

Plows are angled to the right for plowing from the center of the street to the curb. For this reason, snow may be deposited in driveways. Snow placed in driveways or on sidewalks by City plows is the resident's/owner's responsibility to remove.

I just shoveled my sidewalk. Why did the City plow push snow on it?

When City plows come through, snow may end up on the sidewalk you just shoveled. Snow placed in driveways or on sidewalks by City plows is the resident's/owner's responsibility to remove.

Who do I contact if a City plow hits my mailbox or damages my lawn?

Contact the Department of Public Works (DPW) at (517) 337-9459 and they will review the policy with you to determine the responsibility of mailbox replacement. In the case of lawn damage, you will be placed on a list for spring cleanup once the snow has melted. Sod and grass damage is restored by City crews with topsoil and grass seed.

Did the City research what other college communities are doing?

Yes, we looked at what many other communities do in terms of snow/ice sidewalk removal and found that East Lansing's code is one of the more lenient. The public can search ours and other ordinances by visiting www.municode.com.

