

CITY OF GRAND RAPIDS

WINTER PREPAREDNESS GUIDE

Beautiful blankets of snow are perfect for building snowmen, snowshoeing and fantastic winter views. However, it can also affect the services we provide to our residents. If you're interested in snow plowing, parking, refuse and more, keep this guide handy throughout the season.

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SNOW PLOWING

Here's how we clear snow throughout the city

We're constantly improving our winter operations, so we can deliver the highest level of service to our community.

Our plow operators use de-icing materials on major streets to minimize snow and ice. Pretreating material may be applied to bridges, hills and curves before a snow event, if needed. We work hard to minimize our salt use as part of our commitment to environmental sustainability as it reduces runoff in our rivers and streams. This is also part of our commitment to be a good steward of funds. Plus, many of our plow trucks have side wings that plow an additional half lane of snow.

When we do have to use salt, our plow trucks have liquid storage capabilities. This allows for the



An example of a wing blade plow

Our primary goal is to clear all roads of snow within 24-36 hours of a weather event.

pre-wetting of salt as plows spread it on street surfaces. Pre-wetting salt reduces the bounce to keep it on the road. It also helps us reduce the amount of salt we use by 30 percent – another money saver. Plus, salt activates faster when treated.



Priority plowing on first-attention routes

The major high-traffic roads in our city are first-attention streets for snow plowing. We apply salt to all first-attention streets. Examples of first attention streets include:

- Burton
- Division
- Fulton
- Leonard
- Monroe

When do plows go onto secondary (local) streets and alleys?

We monitor weather conditions and clear secondary streets and alleys when there are more than 3 inches of snow. De-icing salt typically is not applied to secondary streets. We may salt these streets if there are hills, severe curves or special circumstances in the city.

Extended snow events may require snow plow crews to leave secondary streets and return to first-attention roads to ensure safety on high-traffic streets. While we make every effort to clear bike lanes our main priority is to keep the automobile travel lanes clear of snow and ice.

WINTER PARKING

*Help keep yourself and your neighbors safe:
Following winter parking rules on posted streets*

Seasonal parking restrictions throughout our city allow us to clear roads of leaves, tree debris and snow in addition to allowing cars and our service and emergency vehicles to travel safely on neighborhood streets in the winter. These restrictions include odd-even and same-side parking.

Our plow crews work hard to clear streets of snow in line with parking regulations. That's why they need your help. If you park on a restricted side of the street and the plows come through, your street won't get completely plowed and your car may get buried in snow. We may not be able to return to plow this street until all regularly scheduled plow routes are complete.

Seasonal parking restrictions are in effect November 1 to April 1. For a map of the restrictions, visit grandrapidsmi.gov/oddeven. You don't have to worry about seasonal parking restrictions if your street doesn't have odd-even or same-side parking signage. Keep in mind that the normal regulations apply to all streets. These include distance from:

- Curb
- Driveways
- Fire hydrants
- Stop signs

Seasonal parking restrictions are enforced whether or not there's snow. Follow these rules to avoid a \$20 parking ticket:

- Park on the even-numbered side of the street on even-numbered days from 1 a.m. to 6 p.m.
- Park on the odd-numbered side of the street on odd-numbered days from 1 a.m. to 6 p.m.
- From 6 p.m. to 1 a.m. the next day, you can park on both sides of the street unless there are signs that say otherwise.
- ***Think ahead before you go to bed!***



SNOW SHOVELING

Getting a “handle” on keeping sidewalks clear benefits everyone



Residents enjoy the walkability of our neighborhoods – even in the winter. Cleared sidewalks ensure you and your neighbors are able to use them. When sidewalks remain clear in the winter, residents who do not drive can walk to the bus or get to work, school or their favorite businesses. Residents – including seniors, children and individuals with disabilities – remain safe when our sidewalks are clear of snow and ice.

The City ordinance for sidewalk snow removal says:

- The clearing of ice and snow on sidewalks is the property owner’s responsibility.
- The full width of the sidewalk needs to be cleared down to the concrete within 24 hours after the end of a snowfall.
- Sidewalks not cleared of snow and ice after notification from the City may be cleared by a City contractor at the property owner’s expense.

Shoveling Tips

Our primary goal is to remove snow from the streets. There is frustration when plows push snow into driveways, sidewalks, fire hydrants and mailboxes. Here’s how you can avoid frustration and help:

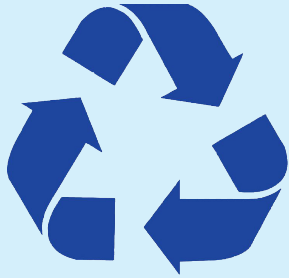
- If you have a driveway, park on it and leave the road clear for plowing
- If on-street parking is your only option, change where you park throughout the week
- Follow all parking restrictions – map is at grandrapidsmi.gov/oddeven
- Don’t shovel or blow snow into the street – shovel it into your yard – to avoid a ticket and having it pushed back into your driveway by traveling vehicles
- Never bury a fire hydrant with shoveled snow and try to keep the hydrant accessible in case of an emergency.

Ensure that the end of your driveway remains clear of snow after plows pass

Place shoveled snow from the end of the driveway here

Clear an area large enough to hold the snow coming off the plow to help reduce the need to shovel a second time





REFUSE & RECYCLING TIPS

Avoid frozen trash

- Bag your trash – it keeps your cart cleaner and helps us do our job
- Unbagged trash can freeze in the cart, making it difficult to empty
- Avoid a partial tip and keep bags and materials from freezing to the bottom by putting a small amount of rock salt in the cart

Don't block sidewalks and streets

- Keep the curbs clear when setting out your trash and recycling carts on collection day – our vehicles need access to your carts
- Keep a clear path between the carts and street

Keep the cart lids closed

- Melting snow and rain can easily fill and freeze bags to the cart. We will not return to empty carts with bags frozen to the cart.
- Frozen trash or recycling can result in an overweight or cracked cart



Shoveling out refuse and recycling carts

Want to make sure we can pick up your trash and recycling this winter? Follow these tips:

1. Clear a path 3 feet wide from your refuse and recycling carts to the alley or street and make sure the carts can be moved freely

2. Shovel out your refuse and recycling carts the night before your collection day

3. Shovel out your carts the following collection day if a heavy snowfall prevents you from doing so in time for your scheduled pickup

Not Proper Placement



Mark Your Calendar

Yard Waste

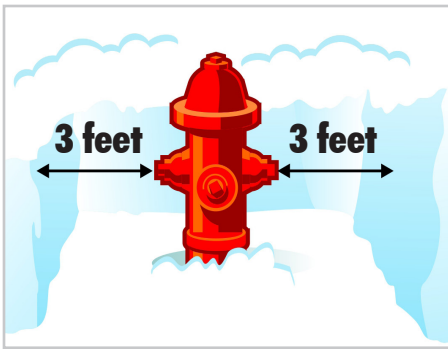
You can drop off yard waste until the second Saturday in December, weather permitting. That's December 12 this year. Drop off yard waste at our site at 2001 Butterworth Ave. SW. It's open 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Saturday. It's closed Thanksgiving Day but is open the Friday and Saturday after the holiday. The site is free for city residents. Curbside collection also runs until early December each

year. It typically ends the second Friday, weather permitting. That's December 11 this year.

Refuse & Recycling Holiday Schedule

We collect refuse and recycling one day later during the weeks following:

- Thanksgiving
- Christmas
- New Year's Day



Keep It Clear

Adopt a hydrant and keep your neighborhood safe

Do you want to make a difference in your neighborhood? Your Grand Rapids Water System and Fire Department have just the job for you.

The Fire Department's emergency response time improves when fire hydrants are visible and clear of snow and ice. We maintain more than 13,000 fire hydrants system-wide.

As a volunteer, you're needed to ensure hydrants are clear of snow and vegetation.

To sign up or learn more about how to adopt a hydrant, go to grandrapidsmi.gov/services/adopt-a-hydrant or call 616.456.3000.

TREE RECYCLING

(a "mulch" better option)



Free drop-off sites

We offer free drop-off sites for Christmas trees after the holidays. The sites, open December 30 to January 31, are located at:

- **Riverside Park** (north entrance), 2001 Monroe Ave. NE
- **MacKay-Jaycees Park**, 2531 Kalamazoo Ave. SE
- **Lincoln Park**, (Garfield Ave. NW entrance) 231 Marion Ave. NW
- **Huff Park**, (Ball St. parking lot) 2286 Ball Ave. NE

All trees collected are chipped and returned naturally to the ground.

Fee-based curbside pickup program

The alternative method for disposing of your tree is to attach a \$2.50 City bulk yard waste tag (purple tag) to the Christmas tree and place it in your pickup area by 7 a.m. on your scheduled refuse collection day.

Bulk yard waste tags may be purchased at City Hall, 300 Monroe Ave. NW, in the customer service lobby. City Hall is open Monday through Friday 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Some local retailers also may have the tags in stock.

Christmas trees placed in the refuse pickup area must be properly tagged for collection. The tag must be visible at the time of collection. Make every effort to be sure the tree is able to be collected (not buried in the snow) and the tag is visible. All ornaments, other decorations, tinsel, nails, tree stands and any plastic bags on the tree need to be removed prior to collection. If not properly tagged, the property owner is subject to a notice of violation and possible fine. Lost or stolen tags are the responsibility of the resident to replace.

Note: Curbside collection may be delayed if there's a snow event.

KEEP YOUR PIPES **WARM** THIS WINTER

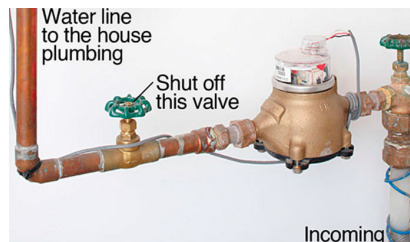


Protect your water meter

Knowing where your shutoff valve is located when a pipe bursts anywhere in your home ensures you can turn off the water at the valve. Be sure everyone in the home knows where it is and what it does in an emergency.

Here are some tips:

- The water shutoff valve is located near the meter where the water line enters the home or building.
- The water meter is installed by the Water System. It is the property owner's responsibility to protect the meter from damage.
- Make sure the space where the meter is located is heated to protect it from freezing.
- If the meter is frozen or damaged, there is a charge to the property for replacement.
- Take extra precautions during extreme temperatures.
- Pipes located next to an outside wall are most susceptible to freezing temperatures. The same is true for pipes located in a garage or another unheated building.



- Exposed pipes in these areas should be wrapped, insulated or shut off and drained before winter.
- Open cupboard doors under sinks and pipe chases.
- Where plumbing is in an exterior wall, access to interior heat helps to keep pipes warm.
- Keep a steady but slow drip of cold water at an inside faucet farthest from the meter.
- Keep water moving – it's less likely to freeze.
- If you're away for more than a day, shut off your water and

leave the thermostat at 55 degrees or higher.

If your water pipes freeze:

- Open a furnace vent or an inside basement door to help thaw a frozen pipe and get heat into the basement.
- Don't use electrical appliances in areas of standing water – you may be electrocuted.
- Contact a licensed plumber to avoid damage when pipes thaw.
- Assume frozen lines are broken or split and buy repair clamps at a plumbing store or contact a plumber and be prepared to turn off the water when the pipes thaw.

Note: If there's no water to your home, the problem may be in the street if the water has been shut off for a water main repair. Call 616.456.3000 to confirm.



HOUSE FIRES

As we spend more time indoors, it is important to understand the fire threats that exist in our own homes. Some common causes of house fire are:

- Cooking
- Smoking
- Portable space heaters
- Electronics and appliances
- Fireplaces and woodstoves
- Children

We recommend these steps to prevent a house fire:

- **Have a plan:** Know where your fire exits are for each room in your house, and make sure there is nothing obstructing them (i.e. stuck windows and screens, furniture blockage).
- **Practice your plan:** Practice your home fire escape plan twice each year.
- **Check your smoke alarms:** Test batteries monthly and change batteries annually. Replace the entire smoke alarm unit every 8-10 years. If someone in your home is has a visual or hearing impairment, install smoke alarms that accommodate this.

- **Protect important information:** Make digital copies of valuable documents and records like birth certificates.
- **Know how to use a fire extinguisher:** Contact your local fire department for information on training on the proper use and maintenance of fire extinguishers.

During a fire, it is important to remember your emergency escape plan so you and your family can exit safely and quickly. Here are a few things you need to know if you are involved in a fire:

- Crawl low under any smoke.

- Before opening a door, feel the door and doorknob. If they are hot and smoke is coming around the door, use a different exit.
- Open doors slowly and be ready to shut doors quickly if there is heavy smoke or fire.
- If you can't get to someone needing assistance, leave the home and call 9-1-1 or the fire department. Tell the emergency operator where the person is located.
- If pets are in the home, tell firefighters right away.
- If you can't get out, close the door and cover vents and cracks around doors with cloth or tape to keep smoke out. Call 9-1-1 or your fire department. Say where you are and signal for help at the window with a light-colored cloth or a flashlight.
- If your clothes catch fire, stop, drop, and roll—stop immediately, drop to the ground, and cover your face with your hands. Roll over and over or back and forth until the fire is out. If you or someone else cannot stop, drop, and roll, smother the flames with a blanket or towel. Use cool water to treat the burn immediately for three to five minutes. Cover with a clean, dry cloth. Get medical help right away by calling 9-1-1 or the fire department.
- If you or a loved one is older or has accessibility needs, ensure they live near an exit and on the ground floor of a building for an easier exit. Also make any necessary accommodations to ensure an easy escape and keep a phone near your bed to call 911.

Visit <https://www.ready.gov/home-fires> for more information on fire prevention and what to do during and after a fire.



Alternative Heating

There's nothing like curling up by a fireplace during a cold winter night. But did you know? Heating equipment – such as furnaces, fireplaces, wood stoves and portable heaters - is a leading cause of house fires in the country, with half of these fires reported in December, January and February. Protect your home from fires with these tips:

- Give space heaters space! Keep anything that can burn – including yourself – at least 3 feet from heating equipment.
- Never use your oven to heat your home.
- Always use the right kind of fuel (specified by the manufacturer) for fuel burning space heaters.
- Have heating equipment and chimneys cleaned and inspected every year.
- Test smoke alarms at least once a month.
- Turn space heaters off when you go to bed or leave the room.



Extra batteries



Wrench or pliers
to turn off utilities



Battery-powered or hand crank radio



Whistle to signal for help



Cell phone with chargers and a backup battery



Dust mask to help filter contaminated air

EMERGENCY KIT

After an emergency, you may not have easy access to stores for food, water, and supplies. Every home should have a basic disaster supplies kit that will last you several days. A basic emergency supply kit should include:



First aid kit



Plastic sheeting and duct tape to shelter in place



Flashlight



Manual can opener

Food (at least a three day supply of non-perishable foods)



Water (at least one gallon per person per day for three days)



Moist towelettes and trash bags for personal sanitation

Store your items in airtight plastic bags, and place all supplies in one or two easy-to-carry containers (i.e. plastic bins or duffel bags). Keep the kits in an easy-to-access location and consider keeping additional supplies at work and in your car. Maintain your kit and update supplies as needed each year.

For a full list of recommended emergency kit supplies, visit <https://www.ready.gov/kit>.



The Homeless Outreach Team

(HOT) is a partnership between the Grand Rapids police and fire departments with the addition of mental health professionals from network180. The team's mission is to preserve health and safety and improve outcomes for homeless persons and our community. The team enables the city to provide timely response to concerns and complaints regarding homelessness. HOT provides a "boots on the ground" presence 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Saturday. They canvass the community to interact with unsheltered persons and engage with businesses and residents to resolve issues. The team works to build personal relationships with individuals to better assist them in obtaining services and housing solutions. HOT can be contacted at 616-456-4240 or grhot@grcity.us. HOT does not respond to general issues outside of street homelessness. Any individual or family who is experiencing housing instability or seeking shelter (homeless or soon to be homeless) should call 2-1-1 to access community services and resources.

Never Rake Leaves into the Street

It is important to keep our streets clean of leaves to prevent clogged catch basins. We do begin street sweeping in November to clear leaves that naturally fall into the roadway, but it is illegal rake, pile, or blow leaves or tree branches into the streets or storm drain. These activities are a violation of the City Code.

Moving leaves into the street poses headaches for your neighbors. Leaves block our sewers and can cause ponding, flooding and icing conditions as we move into the winter. If leaves or other debris are blocking a catch basin inlet near your house or business, please remove and dispose of the debris properly. In addition, during the winter months, try to maintain the openings to catch basins by clearing away any snow or ice.

Never trash or burn your leaves

Michigan law prohibits leaves added to regular trash. It is also against City ordinance to burn leaves. Burning leaves releases large amounts of air pollution, can cause breathing problems for sensitive groups and lead to long-term health effects.

Available options

In addition to curbside yard waste service (call 311 for cart, bag and tag options), you can also dispose of your leaves at our yard waste drop off site. Located at 2001 Butterworth St SW, the site typically opens in April and closes in December. The site is open from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Saturday.

WINTER EVENTS



Grand Rapids is known for its year-round vibrant and unique events and activities. From experiencing interactive art and the World of Winter to running a 5K and ice skating in the park, winter in Grand Rapids provides many opportunities for you to stay engaged in your community.

For more information or to plan your own event, please visit:
<https://www.grandrapidsmi.gov/Residents/My-Neighborhood/Events-Activities>
Email: specialevents@grcity.us
Telephone: 616-456-3378 option 3

Our Parks & Recreation team encourages you to get outside this winter and enjoy one of our 75 great parks.



Winter Preparedness Guide

The *Winter Preparedness Guide* is a public service of the City's Office of Communications and 311 Customer Service Center.

Call 616.456.3000 or
email info@grcity.us
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