

CITY OF GRAND RAPIDS

WINTER PREPAREDNESS GUIDE

Beautiful blankets of snow are perfect for building snowmen and fantastic winter views, however it can also affect City services. Keep this guide handy for information on snow plowing street parking, refuse and more throughout the season.





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.

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.

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 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!***



To report a parking complaint please dial 311 or 616-456-3000 or go online at <https://www.grandrapidsmi.gov/Services/Report-a-Parking-Complaint>

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

Clear this area to minimize buildup from plow trucks

◀ Shovel in the direction of traffic
CLEARED ROADWAY

Preventing Street Flooding in the Winter



CITY OF
GRAND
RAPIDS

Environmental
Services
Department

You may associate street flooding with springtime and rainy seasons. However, if the storm drains on your street are covered with ice and snow when we get a thaw, it could cause street flooding. Here are some handy tips to keep your streets clear and prevent refreezing after a thaw:



Mark Your Drains

Mark your drains in late fall, prior to the snowfall. This will show you where they are after the snow hits.



Shoveling

Shovel the drains from the sidewalk side to stay safe when clearing the storm drains. Put the cleared snow and ice in a vegetated area to increase the chance for the water to soak in when there is a thaw.

Other things to keep in mind for the winter:

Salt Application

- A little salt goes a long way. Apply sparingly and remove the slush once the snow begins to melt. Salt in our stormwater system can be harmful to aquatic life.
- Keep your salt in a covered area to keep it out of runoff and fresh for application.

Vehicle Maintenance

- Winterize your vehicles to prevent leaks.
- Wash your cars at a car wash to keep salt and soap from going into the storm drains, and ultimately the river.

Adopt a Drain

- Do your part to care for our watershed and adopt a drain today!
- Visit [Igrow.org/adopt-a-drain](https://www.igrow.org/adopt-a-drain)



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

Yard Waste

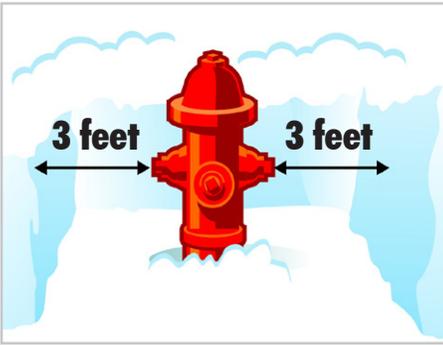
Residents can drop off yard waste year-round at our Compost site. Though curbside collections will stop for the season on the second Friday in December, you can take advantage of year-round operations at our Compost site. You can continue to bring yard waste and Christmas trees as needed. Please remember that no plastic bags or other trash is allowed on site. The site is closed on Thanksgiving day but opens again on Friday.

Refuse & Recycling Holiday Schedule

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

- Thanksgiving
- Christmas
- New Year's Day

Service will not be delayed if the holiday falls on a weekend day.



Keep It Clear

Adopt a hydrant and keep your neighborhood safe

What is Adopt-a-Hydrant? It's a collaboration between the Grand Rapids Water System, Fire Department and the citizens of Grand Rapids. Volunteers are a tremendous help in ensuring hydrants are ready for use by the Grand Rapids Fire Department.

Individuals, businesses, neighborhoods, civic groups and other organizations can select a nearby hydrant and accept responsibility to:

- Clear snow
- Trim tall grass and vegetation
- Report damage or water leaks

Get involved

1. Visit www.grandrapidsmi.gov
2. Search "Adopt a hydrant" in search bar
3. Fill out our online adoption form – use our hydrant map to pick out a hydrant near you

Need help? Call 311 Customer Service at 3-1-1 or (616) 456-3000 for assistance.

We encourage everyone to get involved and adopt a hydrant near you!



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 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. A tree can be left out during the night as it may be collected during our 3rd shift operations.

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.



Put a

FREEZE

on Winter Fires



WORKING smoke alarms is the only device which work 24/7, 365 days a year to help keep you and your family safe from home fires. Smoke alarms are designed to alert the household to the danger long before the smoke and fire can claim a life.

The average home should have **6-8 alarms**: one in each bedroom, the adjoining bedroom hallway, main floor and one in the basement. More or less may be required depending upon the size and configuration of your residence.

Important things to remember:

- Test the device monthly and change the battery (if applicable) annually
- Replace the entire smoke alarm every 10 years
- Acquire bed shakers and/or strobe alarms which can work with smoke alarms to alert hearing impaired residents

Grand Rapids homeowners can get **FREE** smoke alarms and CO detectors from the GRFD by calling 616.456.3933.

Local renters may get similar assistance calling the American Red Cross at 616.456.8661.

PREVENTATIVE AND SURVIVAL MEASURES FOR HOME FIRES

 <p>Half of ALL home heating fires occur in the months of December, January, and February.</p>	 <p>Improper disposal of cigarettes and smoking while in bed is the number one cause of home fires in Grand Rapids; second in the nation.</p>	 <p>Don't allow children to run around the kitchen unsupervised with food cooking on the stove or in the oven.</p>
 <p>STAND BY YOUR PAN. Unattended cooking is the second major cause of fire incidents in GR. If you have to leave the kitchen, turn the stove off.</p>	 <p>Keep anything that can burn at least 3 feet from any heat source like stoves, furnaces, fireplaces, space heaters, and water heaters.</p>	 <p>Don't use cheap or worn out extension cords to power PCs, appliances, holiday lights, or surge protectors.</p>
 <p>Install and test carbon monoxide detectors at least once a month. They can be placed high or low; with the optimal location being the adjoining bedroom hallway.</p>	 <p>Water your Christmas tree every day. Dry needles can ignite quickly. Avoid placing the tree near heat sources which can dry the tree out.</p>	 <p>Never leave a candle unattended. Never burn a candle on or near anything that can catch fire. Keep candles out of the reach of children and pets.</p>



Put a

FREEZE

on Winter Fires

PREVENTATIVE AND SURVIVAL MEASURES FOR HOME FIRES



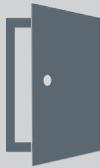
Know how to use your fire extinguisher. Read your user guide for proper use and recharging. Also see YouTube for the four basic steps during use.



Ensure there are no areas where pets can start fires accidentally (including stove knobs, candles, etc.). If pets are in the home, inform the firefighters right away.



GET OUT, STAY OUT. Once a fire starts, you may have less the three minutes to get out. Having gotten outside, never go back in.



CLOSE BEFORE YOU DOZE. Research shows that closing your bedroom door helps prevent a fire from spreading, lessens smoke damage, and could even save lives.



In a fire, smoke and poisonous air hurt more people than the actual flames do. You'll breathe less smoke if you **stay close to the ground.**



In case of a fire and your door has been closed, first use the back of your hand and **touch the middle of the door.** A warm door indicates there is a fire in the hall.



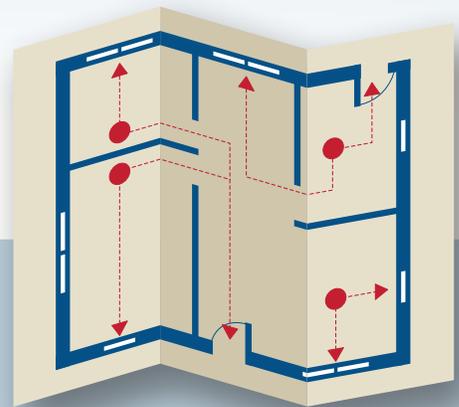
Get outside, away from the fire and call **911.** Should you have a mobility issue, keep the door closed and call 911. Stay near a window so they can spot you.



Protect your important information. Make digital copies of valuable documents and records like phone numbers, passwords, and birth certificates.



Get additional information and safety tips to know how to prevent home fires and what to do during a fire at: www.ready.gov/home-fires.



EVERY SECOND COUNTS - PLAN TWO WAYS OUT

During a home fire, you may only have three minutes to get everyone to safety. The GRFD stresses it is important to plan and remember your emergency escape plan so you and your family can exist safely and quickly. Here are a few things you need to know to make the appropriate plans:

- Draw a map of each floor of your home. Include all windows and doors.
- Mark two ways out of every room (e.g., bedroom door and bedroom window).
- Go through the home and ensure that doors and windows are not blocked or locked in a manner to obstruct existing.
- Choose an outside meeting place. It can be the mailbox, a neighbor's home, a specific tree or other landmark.
- Practice an emergency drill with everyone in the home at least twice.

If you need a grid sheet to map out your floor plan you can get one from NFPA at: www.nfpa.org

WINTER DRIVING



IF YOU CAN SEE YOUR BREATH, IT'S TIME TO SWITCH!

Summer and all-season tires may not provide optimum performance capabilities when the temperature approaches freezing — even when the roads are dry. Look for the mountain/snowflake symbol to identify tires that meet the newest snow standards.



WEAR YOUR SEATBELT.

Accidents happen more frequent with wet and icy roads. Always wear your seatbelt and ensure everyone in your vehicle does the same, including young children in proper car seats.

GAS UP.

Keep your gas tank on no less than half full in the winter. This will help keep your gas line from freezing up.



YOU CRUISE, YOU LOSE.

Avoid using cruise control in wet, icy, or snow conditions to maintain control of acceleration and deceleration at all times.



PREVENT A BAD SITUATION FROM GETTING WORSE.

If you're involved in an accident, try to pull your vehicle off the road and use hazard lights, flares, reflectors, or flashlights to warn other drivers. **STAY OFF THE ROAD**, dial **911**, and wait for the police to arrive. These actions can help prevent multi-vehicle crashes in winter weather.



DIAL BEFORE YOU DRIVE A MILE.

Call **511** to access travel and traffic conditions to where you are headed before leaving. Forty-one states utilize the Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) to improve driving safety and enhance mobility.



Do you get Emergency Alerts?

Sign up to receive emergency alerts for severe weather and other emergencies at grandrapidsmi.gov/EmergencyAlerts

BE PREPARED

Sign up today for local emergency alerts

When emergencies happen, you want to be in the know. Stay informed by signing up grandrapidsmi.gov/EmergencyAlerts. Alerts are sent for weather warnings, boil water notices, evacuation notices and other emergency messages. [#PrepareToProtect](https://twitter.com/PrepareToProtect)

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EMERGENCY KIT



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

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 among the Grand Rapids Fire Department, Grand Rapids Police Department, and Network180. HOT members conduct street outreach to engage unsheltered individuals, support their basic needs and build relationships to help access community-based services and housing solutions. HOT also engages businesses and residents to resolve issues. HOT will:

- Refer individuals to housing, emergency shelter, mental health and substance use disorder services, and other services as needed
- Address health and safety concerns
- Provide education on City ordinances
- Conduct jail and emergency department diversions for unsheltered individuals

Contact HOT with non-emergency concerns related to unsheltered homelessness at 616-456-4240 or email grhot@grcity.us. HOT is staffed Monday-Saturday, 6:00am to 6:00pm.

- Call 211 if you are experiencing homelessness, or at risk of homelessness, to connect to resources.
- Call 311 with general questions or concerns related to homelessness in the City of Grand Rapids.
- Call 911 in instances related to safety concerns, crimes in progress, damage to property, or threat to life.

Locations for emergency shelter for men, women, and families are below. Please contact 211 for information about emergency shelter or warming centers.

Mel Trotter Ministries
225 Commerce Ave. SW
Grand Rapids, MI 49503

Degage Ministries
144 Division Ave. S
Grand Rapids, MI 49503

FIND YOUR FUN!

Grand Rapids is known for its year-round vibrant and unique events and activities. From experiencing interactive art and parades 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.

Save the date: Annual Tree Lighting event on the first Friday in December at Rosa Parks Circle. For more information or to plan your own event, please visit: grandrapidsmi.gov/events

Email: specialevents@grcity.us

Call: 616-456-3378x3

