
CITY OF MUSCATINE PRESS RELEASE

For more information contact:

Kevin Jenison
Public Information Officer/Communication Manager
City of Muscatine, Iowa
E-Mail: kjenison@muscatineiowa.gov
Phone: (563) 264-1550 • Fax: (563) 264-0750

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ALL AVAILABLE CITY STAFF AT WORK IN SNOW REMOVAL EFFORT

Slush caused by snow then rain puts emphasis on plowing before overnight freeze



MUSCATINE, Iowa – The first major winter storm of the season swept through Muscatine Tuesday (Dec. 30, 2020) leaving behind 5.8 inches of snow topped with a tenth of an inch of ice making travel and snow removal difficult at best.

Delays in the snow removal effort occurred as the temperature dropped throughout the day Wednesday and the slushy snow mixture began to freeze resulting in several plows having to be repaired due to the abuse they are taking trying to remove frozen snow and ice.

“Our staff is working as hard as they can and moving as quickly as is safely possible,” Brian Stine, Department of Public Works (DPW) Director, said. “Despite these efforts there is a very real chance that many residential streets will be difficult to travel for several days and possibly into next week.”

With temperatures as low as they are, City crews were unable to make much progress on ice removal.

The first big event is always a challenge as people try to remember how to park and drive in winter weather conditions.

“Residents just need to slow down and take their time when driving,” Stineman said. “It also helps us if they park off the street until we complete snow removal operations (pushing snow back to curb).”

It also brings out frustrations that we don't get there sooner or do a better job. I feel my staff should be commended for the time and effort that they are putting in. We are receiving multiple complaint calls and will do our best to address everyone's issues as well as we can.

5:00 p.m. Update

City snow plow crews continue to work on side streets and alleys this evening with initial passes through the side streets to “open them up” to at least one plowed lane down the center. In addition four of the six alley routes have been “gone through” and plowed as best as possible with pickup trucks.

“Mostly they were pushing slush around so there are undoubtedly some rough spots,” Stineman said. “We will pick up tomorrow morning to finish the last two alley routes.”

Stineman said the day shift will continue as before pushing back emergency routes and then switch to pushing back in residential areas. The night shift will be in at 7:00 p.m. and will continue wherever the day shift leaves off.

“If all goes well we should be done pushing back everything by tomorrow afternoon or evening, just in time for more precipitation on Friday and into the weekend,” Stineman said.

The Downtown area may not see the snow piles cleared until this weekend.

“Due to more snow and ice projections for Friday, along with the holiday, we are not going to have our contractor do downtown parking lot removal until after the event Friday night or Saturday morning,” Stineman said. “This shouldn't take them more than a day so parking should be back to normal by Monday morning.”

2:30 p.m. Update

All snow removal equipment available is being used to plow. Crews finished initial passes on all residential streets to "open them up" to at least one plowed lane down the center.

“The success of this varies depending on how packed the snow is before we get there,” Stineman said. “In areas where the snow has been compacted to ice we are having a difficult time with removal and it will take some sun and salt to loosen things up for us to plow it off.”

After the initial passes through residential streets, crews began to push snow back to the curb on the emergency routes. Once the emergency routes are finished, snow plow crews will return to residential streets and begin pushing snow back to the curb in those areas.

In the meantime two 1-ton trucks have been working all day plowing alleys with two of the six alley routes completed by noon Wednesday. Stineman said these crews will pick up where they left off Thursday assuming the snow is not frozen so hard that the crews cannot make progress.

9:00 a.m. Update

Crews from the City of Muscatine Department of Public Works (DPW) along with staff from other departments have been out since early Tuesday afternoon spreading salt at first and then coming back with the plows to move the snow to the curb.

“We start with salt first because the snow helps to keep the salt from spreading to areas that we do not want the salt to go,” Stinemansaid. “Once this is accomplished we come back with the plows.”

“The roads are not in good condition at this time and with the slush that we are dealing with, it is a race against time to get everything pushed to the curb before it freezes hard overnight,” Stineman said.

The public can assist City staff with their snow removal efforts by utilizing off-street parking or to use alternate side parking when off-street is not an option. Alternative side parking asks residents to park on the even side of the street on even days and parking on the odd side of the street on odd days.



“As always, we encourage everyone who can to use off-street parking so that the plows can access the whole street,” Stineman said. “Remember to slow down, drive carefully, and enjoy the snow.”

Every available staff member has joined the snow removal effort including non-roadway maintenance staff who have been assigned to a one-ton plow truck to work the alleys.

“In our snow removal plan alleys are the last to be cleared,” Stineman said. “However, if we don’t get to them before it freezes tonight, they may become impassable.”

Stineman said that he hopes to have at least one pass through every street and alley before the slush freezes overnight.

“We understand the frustration of the travelling public and appreciate their patience and cooperation,” Stineman said. “With the sleet and ice that we received we are having a difficult time getting around town as well and have had to add tire chains to many of our snow plows. We are doing the best we can with the weather that we received.”



Another aspect of the snow removal effort is the clearing of the storm drains that have been covered up by the snow and ice. Collection & Drainage staff were out Wednesday clearing the catch basins so that the streets can drain better after they have been plowed. Many streets currently have standing water near the curb after last night's rain.

Temperatures are expected to fall to around 10 degrees by early Thursday (Dec. 31, 2020) morning which could hamper snow removal efforts. However, the National Weather Service (NWS) out of the [Quad Cities](#) predicts sunny skies and a high of 26 degrees on Thursday. However, a second system is expected to impact Muscatine on New Year's Day with an additional 1-3 inches of snow and sleet accumulation. Whereas Tuesday's storm was snow first and then ice, Friday's storm may start with ice and then turn into snow.

Visit [Snow & Ice Control](#) on the City of Muscatine website for more information.

MUSCABUS RUNNING SNOW ROUTES

MuscaBus, Muscatine's Public Transit system, will continue to run snow routes until Thursday, Dec. 31. ([See map](#))

Be Prepared

As we move into the winter season, residents can be better prepared for hazardous conditions by visiting the National Weather Service [Winter Safety](#) page.

Preparedness:

- A **Winter Storm Watch** is issued when conditions are favorable for significant winter weather and/or blizzard conditions. Time to prepare.

- A **Winter Storm Warning** is issued when a combination of heavy snow, blowing snow, and possibly ice mixed with snow is expected to impact the area. Time to act.
- A **Blizzard Warning** is issued when the combination of strong wind, low visibility, and heavy snow will significantly impact daily life.

If you are travelling plan extra travel time, drive slower and more cautiously, bundle up, and check the following links for road conditions:

- [National Weather Service-Quad Cities Road Conditions](#)
- [Iowa Department of Transportation Road Conditions](#)
- [Illinois Department of Transportation Road Conditions](#)