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## CITY OF MUSCATINE PRESS RELEASE

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### **KEEP FIRE HYDRANTS CLEAR OF SNOW AND ICE ACCUMULATION**

*You can help Muscatine Fire Department by clearing area around fire hydrants*



**MUSCATINE, Iowa** – Snow has covered the Muscatine area landscape since December 29, 2020, and more snow is on the way. While the main concern about the nearly three-feet of snow we have received this winter is the clearing of streets, alleys, sidewalks, and driveways, the Muscatine Fire Department urges residents to add fire hydrants to their snow removal operations.

The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) reminds residents that snow accumulation can quickly obstruct fire hydrants and block access from fire department vehicles. Fires happen in the snow, too, and ensuring that the fire department has the necessary access to water supply should they need to respond to a fire is important.

“The reasoning is that when we respond to a structure fire, we need access to the hydrant for a continuous water supply,” Jerry Ewers, Chief of the Muscatine Fire Department, said. “If we cannot see the hydrant, or we have to dig it out, that causes delays in our response and in getting the water we need.”

Most fire vehicles carry a limited amount of water on board and that can be quickly exhausted while fighting a structure fire.

"There are delays without adequate water protection," Ewers said, "delays in attacking the fire and delays in going inside a structure if we have to make a rescue."

Fire doubles in size every minute and can consume an entire room in as little as three minutes. A covered fire hydrant delays fire suppression efforts and that could mean additional property damage, injuries, or even lives lost.

"Every second counts," Ewers said. "So we are asking residents to help us protect them by ensuring that a three-foot area is cleared around hydrants that may be located on their property so that we can connect to them when needed."

Ewers added that the department is very appreciative of residents who have taken the time to clear snow and ice from around the hydrants.

Fire code states that unobstructed access (at least three feet in circumference) to fire hydrants shall be maintained at all times, but whose responsibility is it to keep fire hydrants clear of obstructions. With over 1,300 fire hydrants in Muscatine, the best answer is that everyone has a role to play.

"It is always a good idea to take the initiative if you are a resident or a business owner, to clear the snow away from a fire hydrant near your home or business," Ewers said.

"The extra effort you take allows a quicker response from the fire department when needed."

Ewers also reminded residents that, whether it is a medical emergency or a fire call, the fire department will be there to provide assistance. Clearing the area around fire hydrants along with ensuring that sidewalks are cleared will help reduce response time.

