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FRANKLIN



TIMES

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'Local Government 101' Snow Season Is Here, and the Township is Ready

Residents have requested information on the workings of municipal government — an insider's view of Franklin Township in action. For that reason, various aspects of municipal government will be the focus of articles that have been titled: Local Government 101. If you find these articles helpful and have ideas and suggestions for future articles, call (732) 873-2500, ext. 239, or e-mail joyce.miller@twp.franklin.nj.us.



While some people look forward to the beauty and fun of a winter storm, others are busy planning how to deal with the inevitable unsafe conditions. The Township's Public Works Department starts planning early to provide safe passage for residents and those traveling to and through Franklin.

- How many miles of streets must be maintained by the Township? County? State? How much does it cost the Township?
- What are the routes, and in what priority?
- What about emergencies?
- Is there enough equipment and crew to handle the job?
- If not, how can the gap be filled?
- Is the salt dome full? Is there enough sand and liquid de-icer? When will each be used?
- Is there money in the budget?
- What are the responsibilities of residents and private plowing contractors?

Miles of Streets

The Franklin Public Works Department is responsible for maintaining 230 miles of public roadway. That does not include the roads maintained by the state or county (listed below) or private developments or gated communities. **The goal of the Township of Franklin is for passable roadways during the winter season, which is not the same as blacktop.**

The cost for snow removal for the 2008-2009 season was \$1,061.01 per mile.

Private developments and gated communities must secure private contractors to maintain their roadways. The Municipal Services Act, N.J.S.A. 40:67-23.2 to -23.8, which became effective January, 1993, provides that every municipality in New Jersey is required to either provide snow plowing to each qualified private community within its borders or reimburse the community for these services to eliminate double payment through property taxes and association fees. After each winter season, the Township determines the total annual cost per linear mile for snow removal for all public streets they maintain. The associations are then reimbursed the Township's cost per linear mile multiplied by the total linear miles of their private streets. For the 2008-2009 season, Franklin reimbursed 30 private communities \$1,061.01 per mile, or an approximate \$36,000.

Roadways not maintained by Franklin:

State—Route 287 and Rt. 27

Somerset County—

- | | |
|---|-----------------------|
| Easton Avenue | South Middlebush Road |
| Elizabeth Avenue | Weston Canal Road |
| Manville Causeway | Laurel Avenue |
| Kingston-Rocky Hill Road | Old Road |
| Andover Road | Cedar Grove Lane |
| Franklin Boulevard | Landing Lane |
| Amwell Road | Hamilton Street |
| Bunker Hill Road | Route 518 |
| Blackwells Mills Rd. (Canal to River Road) | |
| Canal Road from Griggstown Causeway to Bunker Hill Road | |
| Griggstown Causeway | Claremont Road |

Routes and Emergencies

The Township is charted out into 51 routes, and each of the roads along those routes are maintained in the following order:

- Streets considered by the Police Department to be emergency routes, including all streets on which schools are located
- Streets to first aid squads and fire houses
- Main streets
- Secondary streets
- Bike paths
- Parks

If there is an emergency first-aid call from a house or business, a plow goes with the ambulance to ensure they can get to the call and they can transport to the hospital if necessary.

Equipment and Crew

Thirty-five of the 51 routes are covered by Township employees. To handle the remaining 16 routes, the Township accepted bids from private contractors.

If the trucks were to go out at the end of the storm to start plowing, it would take eight hours to clear all roads.

Salt, Sand and Liquid De-Icer

The Township's 800-ton salt dome is full at the start of the season, as is the sand pile and tank of liquid de-icer. These are purchased through cooperative programs from Somerset County and the State of New Jersey to take advantage of pricing for bulk quantities.

If there is an accumulation of less than two inches, which happened numerous times in the 2008-2009 season, the trucks are applying salt rather than plowing. Approximately 250 tons of salt are applied in each storm.

When the temperature drops into the teens or below, liquid de-icer is added to the salt. Once the snow starts to accumulate over two inches, the trucks start plowing. If there is too much ice, sand is added to the salt to improve traction. After plowing, the trucks may make another pass with salt over uncleared roads.

Budget

Since there is no way to predict what the winter season will bring, each year the Council puts funds into the snow removal budget. What money isn't used in a mild winter gets put into a trust which can be used the following year if needed.

RESIDENTS CAN ASSIST

- Trucks plow curb to curb. Residents are asked to remove from the street garbage and recycling cans basketball hoops, and cars if possible.
- Remove snow from around fire hydrants.
- If at all possible, stay at home until the trucks have done their job.
- Property owners are responsible for snow and ice removal from the full width of the sidewalk within 12 hours of daylight after any snowfall or accumulation of ice occurs. In the event that ice may be so frozen to make removal impossible, residents must cover the sidewalk with sand, ashes, sawdust or rock salt within the same time period. Tickets will be given for non-compliance.
- Snow must not be pushed or plowed from a driveway into a street or sidewalk so that it impedes vehicle or pedestrian traffic or access. Tickets will be given for violations.
- Snow plows angle to the driver's right, and there is NO way to prevent pushing the snow in front of a driveway. Residents can wait to shovel the last 3 to 4 feet of driveway nearest the street until the plow passes. It is also helpful to push the snow to the right of the driveway (looking from the house) so the plow pushes the snow further away as it passes.
- Snow plows do operate at night, and this may waken some residents. That is a fact of life and not much can be done to prevent this.
- Mailboxes *struck* by a plow will be repaired or replaced. However, mailboxes that fall from the force of the plowed snow are the homeowner's responsibility since they should be installed to withstand the rigors of snow removal.

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