

Help Keep Yakima Safe When Winter Weather Hits

Now that the Yakima Valley has had its first real taste of icy winter weather, it's a good time to remember that it takes everyone pitching in to keep our area as safe as possible when snow or freezing rain make roads and sidewalks slick.



Home owners and business owners need to keep sidewalks near their property clear of snow and ice.

City crews, along with private contractors hired by the City, follow a formal snow removal plan that's focused on keeping streets clear, especially near schools, hospitals, major intersections, and on hills.

But under a City ordinance passed several years ago, home owners and business owners are responsible for making sure sidewalks near their property are free of snow and ice. Shoveling snow before ice has a chance to form makes the job a lot easier. But if ice does build up on a sidewalk, you shouldn't use rock salt to get rid of it.

"The chemicals in rock salt (sodium chloride) tend to make concrete chip and crack," said Yakima Streets and Traffic Operations Manager Joe Rosenlund. "Calcium or magnesium chloride-based 'hot melts' are a much better option. Hot melts work like rock salt, but are effective over a wider range of temperatures and won't damage sidewalks," said Rosenlund.

Another common problem arises this time of year when some people shovel or blow snow from their sidewalks onto City streets. Doing so is not only unsafe, it's illegal.

"Moving snow from sidewalks out into streets creates a serious hazard for drivers," said Rosenlund. "It's not just a bad idea, it's against the law. Instead of putting snow in the street and hoping a plow will come by, it's a lot better to pile snow from sidewalks in your yard or somewhere else," said Rosenlund. "Anywhere's better than piling it in the road."



Private contractors, along with City of Yakima crews, help keep streets clear during heavy snow falls.

Help is available for senior citizens, disabled people, or others who need assistance to remove snow from sidewalks near their property by calling the City's Office of Neighborhood Development Services at 575-6101.

**Help
Wanted**

Be Part of the Solution!

Help reduce panhandling. Instead of giving money directly to panhandlers, donate to local agencies and organizations that provide services to people who are low-income or homeless.

Yakima is our community – Be Part of the Solution!