

City of Virginia

SNOW AND ICE CONTROL POLICY AND PROCEDURES

1. Introduction

The City of Virginia believes that it is in the best interest of the citizens for the City to assume basic responsibility for control of snow and ice on City streets. Reasonable snow and ice control is necessary for routine travel and emergency service. The city will attempt to provide such control in a safe and cost effective manner, keeping in mind safety, budget, personnel, and environmental concerns.

2. Personnel

All Public Works Personnel shall know snow and ice control operations. The Public Works Director or their designee shall also have the ability to utilize other departments, seasonal personnel, and private contractors in emergency circumstances to assist with snow removal operations. City crews remove snow from approximately 120 miles of streets within the city.

This policy does not relieve the operator of private vehicles, pedestrians, property owners, residents and all others that may be using public streets, of their responsibility to act in a reasonable, prudent and cautious manner, given the prevailing street conditions.

3. When Will the City Start Snow or Ice Control Operations?

The Public Works Director or their designee will decide when to begin snow or ice control operations. The criteria for that decision are:

- Snow accumulation of three (3) inches or more;
- Drifting of snow that causes problems for travel;
- Icy conditions which seriously affect travel; and
- Time of snowfall in relationship to heavy use of streets.

Snow and ice control operations are expensive and involve the use of limited personnel and equipment. Consequently, snowplowing operations will not generally be conducted for snowfall of less than) inches.

4. How Snow will be Plowed

Snow will be plowed in a manner so as to minimize traffic obstructions.

- The center of the roadway will be plowed first.
- The snow shall then be pushed from left to right on two-way streets.
- On one-way streets or where there is a center boulevard, snow may be pushed in either direction. The discharge shall go onto the boulevard area of the street.
- Snow on cul-de-sacs will normally be plowed to the center in an attempt to provide the largest turning radius possible for emergency vehicle ingress and egress.
- When a plow goes on a bridge, the driver shall slow down so snow does not go over the bridge, if possible.
- In times of extreme snowfall, streets will not always immediately be able to be completely cleared of snow.
- In the Central Business District (Chestnut Street), businesses should plow or push the snow on the sidewalks to the gutter line for removal.

5. Priorities and Schedule of Streets to be Plowed

The city has classified city streets based on the street function, traffic volume and importance to the welfare of the community.

- Streets classified or functioning as arterial streets; streets and alleys in the Central Business District; and those designated as "Emergency Snow Plow Routes" are plowed 1st. These are high volume streets that connect major sections of the city and provide access for emergency services.

- The second priority streets are those streets providing access to schools and commercial businesses.
- The third priority streets are low volume residential streets.
- The fourth priority areas are alleys and city parking lots.
- Sidewalks, pedestrian bridges, steps, and sidewalks that abut city property are plowed after the streets have been plowed and other snow and ice control functions of higher priority have been completed.

During significant and severe storms, the city must be prepared to move personnel and equipment to maintain priority routes first. In fulfilling the need to have all priority streets safe and passable, when resources are limited, plowing of all other streets may be stopped at any time so resources can be shifted to priority routes.

Unforeseeable circumstances may cause delays in completing assigned plow routes. Such circumstances may include weather conditions that endanger the safety of snowplow operators and/or safe and effective operation of equipment, commuter traffic, disabled vehicles, poor visibility conditions, parked cars along streets, assistance to emergency response vehicles, equipment breakdown, and personnel shortages.

6. Snow Removal

As a public service to residents and the business community, banks of snow left after plowing will be removed from the downtown area and public parking in a timely manner.

- The Public Works Director or their designee will determine if and when snow will be removed from the area by truck.
- Such snow removal will occur in areas where there is no room on the boulevard for snow storage and in areas where accumulated piles of snow create a hazardous condition.
- Snow removal operations will not commence until other snowplowing operations have been completed.
- Snow removal operations may also be delayed depending on weather conditions, personnel and budget availability.
- The snow will be removed and hauled to a snow storage area. The snow storage area will be located so as to minimize environmental problems.

7. Plowing and/or Sanding of Private Property

Unless there is direct benefit to the City operations or unless emergency vehicles need access, there will be no plowing or ice control of private property with City equipment.

8. Sidewalks

In accordance with provisions of City Code (Section 7-05), all snow and ice remaining upon public sidewalks is hereby declared to constitute a public nuisance and shall be abated by the owner or tenant of the abutting private property within 12 hours after the snow or ice has ceased to be deposited. This includes any snow plowed from public streets onto the sidewalk. As per City Code 7-07, it is a misdemeanor for any person to remove snow or ice from private property and place it on a sidewalk. Snow should not be piled or plowed around trees, poles, or other fixtures.

When available, the city will maintain some of the sidewalks in the city. The list of those sidewalks is Attachment B. As there are a limited number of personnel available, the city will only maintain these sidewalks after the streets have been plowed.

9. Driveways

One of the most frequent and irritable problems in removal of snow from public streets is the snow deposited in driveways during plowing operations. Snow being accumulated on the plow blade has no place to go but in the driveway. The amount of snow deposited in the driveways may be significant but is

unavoidable due to the nature of snow removal. The depth of snow in any given driveway is proportional to the depth of the given snowfall. The City will not clean driveways based on financial restraints and available personnel. As per City Code 7-07, it is a misdemeanor for any person to remove snow or ice from private property and place it on a sidewalk or street

10. Work Schedule for Snowplow Operators

Work periods shall not exceed safe limits that operators can continue without rest. When a larger snowfall occurs, the same procedures apply except that crews may need to work longer shifts and / or back-to-back shifts. However, because of budget and safety concerns, no operator shall work more than a twelve-hour shift in any twenty-four hour period. After a twelve-hour shift, the operators will be replaced if additional qualified personnel are available.

11. Traffic Regulations

The city recognizes that snowplow operators are exempt from traffic regulations set forth in Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 169 while actually engaged in work on streets, except for regulations related to driving while impaired and the safety of school children. Pursuant to this authority, snowplow operators engaged in snow removal or ice control on city streets have discretion to disregard traffic laws set forth in Chapter 169, except for laws relating to impaired driving and school children safety, when in their judgment, it is safe to disregard such laws. The privileges granted herein to operators of snow removal and ice control vehicles shall apply only if the vehicle is equipped with one lighted lamp displaying a flashing, oscillating, or rotating amber light placed in such a position on the vehicle as to be visible throughout an arc of 360 degrees.

12. Weather Conditions

Snow and ice control operations will be conducted only when weather conditions do not endanger the safety of snowplow operators and equipment. Factors that may delay snow and ice control operations include: severe cold, significant winds, and limited visibility. When weather conditions are so severe as to endanger city work crews and equipment, snow and ice control operations may not be started, or if started, they may be stopped.

13. Use of Sand, Salt, and Other Chemicals

The city is concerned about the effect of such chemicals on the environment and will limit its use for that reason. As required by MN Statute 160.215, City Public Works crews shall utilize such salt or other chemicals only at such places as upon hills, at intersections, or upon high-speed or arterial roadways where vehicle traction is particularly critical, and only if, in the opinion of the Public Works Director or their designee, removal of snow and ice or reduction of hazardous conditions by blading, plowing, sanding, including chemicals needed for free flow of sand, or natural elements cannot be accomplished within a reasonable time.

14. Damage to Property

A. Mailboxes

Damage to a mailbox is a risk that snowplow operators face during their winter plowing requirements. The city will conduct a review of each mailbox damage claim to determine, whether the city has any legal responsibility for the damage and if so, to replace or provide reimbursement for the mailbox. Proper installation procedures for mailboxes is Attachment C.

Where mailboxes are installed on a city-owned right-of-way, and in the event a mailbox is damaged due to the force of snow generated by the snow removal operations, the city will assume no responsibility.

If the city, in its discretion, determines that reimbursement or replacement is appropriate, the city may:

- 1) At the mailbox owner's request, replace the mailbox with a standard size, non-decorative metal mailbox and replace the support post as necessary with a 4" x 4", decay resistance wood support post, both which will be installed by the city;
- 2) Provide reimbursement in a reasonable amount for the mailbox and support posts that meet the city's ordinance standards, as well as state and federal requirements for mailbox size, support and placement.

B. Items in the Right-of-Way

Any items placed, installed or that are encroaching on City owned right-of-way (including but not limited to basketball nets, fences, landscaping, etc.) must be removed so as not to impede our snow removal processes. The City will assume no responsibility for damages incurred to these items as the result of snow removal and ice control activities except that the City will repair or replace sod only on City owned right-of-way that is removed as the result of plowing activities.

15. Calendar Parking Restrictions

Winter Calendar parking restrictions go into effect November 1 each year and remain in effect until April 1. If a snow emergency is declared and you are parked in violation of the ordinances, your vehicle can be towed to facilitate plowing. Snow emergencies will be announced on the City's website, social media pages, local radio stations and posted on cable channel 5. If you have questions, contact Parking Violations at (218) 748-7510 or you may view the information online.

16. Declaration of Snow Emergency

Whenever, in the opinion of the Public Works Director or their designee or in his or her absence, the City Administrator and/or the Emergency Management Director, an emergency exists he or she may declare a Snow Emergency and cause an announcement thereof to be made to local news media.

A. Beginning and Duration of Emergency

The emergency shall begin one hour after announcement to news media. Once declared, the emergency shall remain in effect for the ensuing 72 hours, provided that the emergency may, in the same manner, be re-declared for subsequent like periods of time.

B. Unlawful Acts

During a declared Snow Emergency, it is unlawful to park or leave standing any vehicles in the following circumstances:

- On any street signposted in a manner similar to an Emergency Snow Plow Route.
- On that side of the street on which the addresses include odd-numbered buildings on such dates as are also odd-numbered; or
- On that side of the street on which the addresses include even-numbered buildings on such dates as are also even-numbered.

C. Exceptions – This section shall not apply to the following:

- Persons in charge of wreckers or authorized emergency vehicles while actually servicing mechanical, fire, police or medical emergencies; or
- Any street when it has been fully and completely (curb-to-curb) cleared, sanded, salted or cleaned.

D. Frequency

Due to the higher costs and expanded number of resources involved with a snow emergency it is with great prejudice that a snow emergency will be declared. This type of declaration should be reserved for extreme or severe weather situations.

E. Towing Authorized (MN Statute 168B.035, Subd 3. B 1)

Any vehicle which is left parked or standing on a public street designated as an Emergency Snow Route during a snow emergency in violation of this section is hereby declared a nuisance and shall be subject to a monetary fine as affixed by the city council from time to time and may be subject to impounding. The owner of any vehicle impounded as a result of such nuisance shall be responsible for any and all cost related to the impounding of said vehicle. The fine imposed on a vehicle pursuant to this section shall not prevent or preclude the institution and prosecution of preceding for violations of this sections against the vehicle owner.

F. Notice of Snow Emergency Parking Provisions

Prior to November 1st of each year, the City shall publish in the official newspaper and on it's official website the Snow Emergency Parking Provisions. The Notice shall also be posted at City Hall at the time of publication.

17. Complaint Procedure

Complaints will be recorded on telephone logs. Calls requiring service will be transferred to a work request and forwarded to the appropriate supervisor for scheduling. Emergency complaints will be handled in an expeditious manner as resources are available.

18. Dumping of Snow at City Snow Dumps

The Public Works Director or their designee shall determine if there is available space at the City snow dumps for storage and acceptance of snow from private properties.

19. Deviation from Policy

A. Weather Conditions/Suspension of Operations/Limited Staff

The Public Works Director or their designee may deviate from this policy when in his or her judgment it is in the best interest of the city or is necessary because of budget needs or other circumstances. Changes in priorities (lasting more than 4 hours) will be documented as to what caused such actions, why the change was necessary, and for how long the change is to be in effect. Those city employees and/or contractors affected will be notified immediately by radio or cell phone of such changes with all communications logged. Information logged will include the time and date of the communication, name of employee contacted, and how they were contacted. Any changes of priorities lasting more than 24 hours should be made in a written record and the public should be informed of such changes through normal methods used by the city for emergency notifications.

B. Conditions Which May Impact Goals Stated Within This Policy

- Vehicles disabled in deep snow
- Weather so severe as to cause crews to be called in from the street, i.e., whiteout conditions or icy conditions
- Equipment rendered inadequate by the depths of the snow, drifts or ice conditions, Re-fueling, refilling material spreaders, installing new plow cutting edges, and routine maintenance
- Illegally parked, parked, or stalled vehicles that restrict or prevent access; those streets, walks and pathways will be assigned to lower priority, as available
- Unforeseen emergencies
- Equipment breakdown

20. Review and Modification of Policy

The Public Works Director or their designee shall keep on file all comments and complaints received regarding this policy. The policy will be reviewed periodically. Any review will consider comments and complaints since the last review and any other factors affecting the policy or its implementation.

EXHIBITS

- Exhibit A: Large citywide map with plow routes
- Exhibit B: City and postal installation requirements for mailboxes
- Exhibit C: Snowplow visibility diagram

EXHIBIT A

Snow Plow Routes

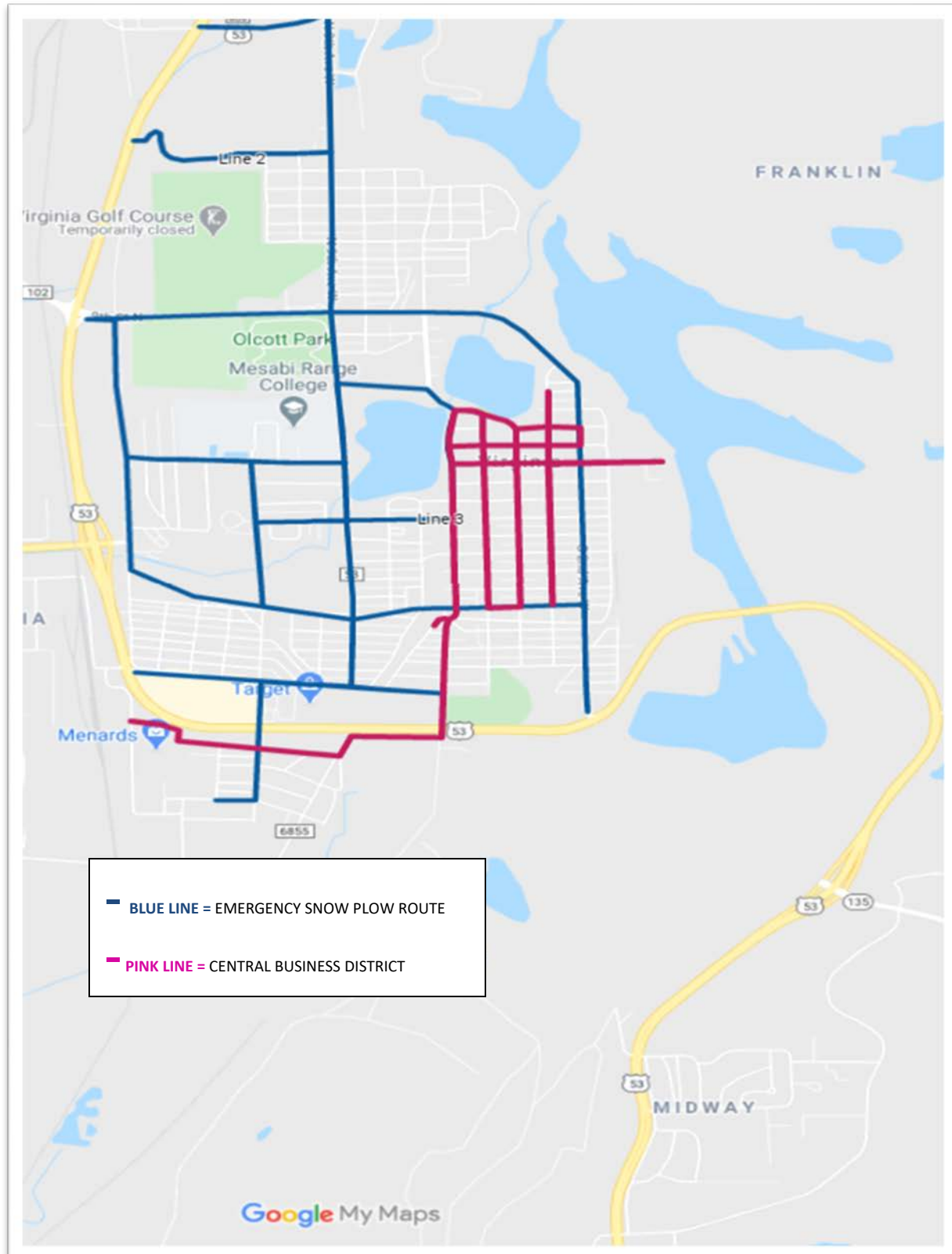
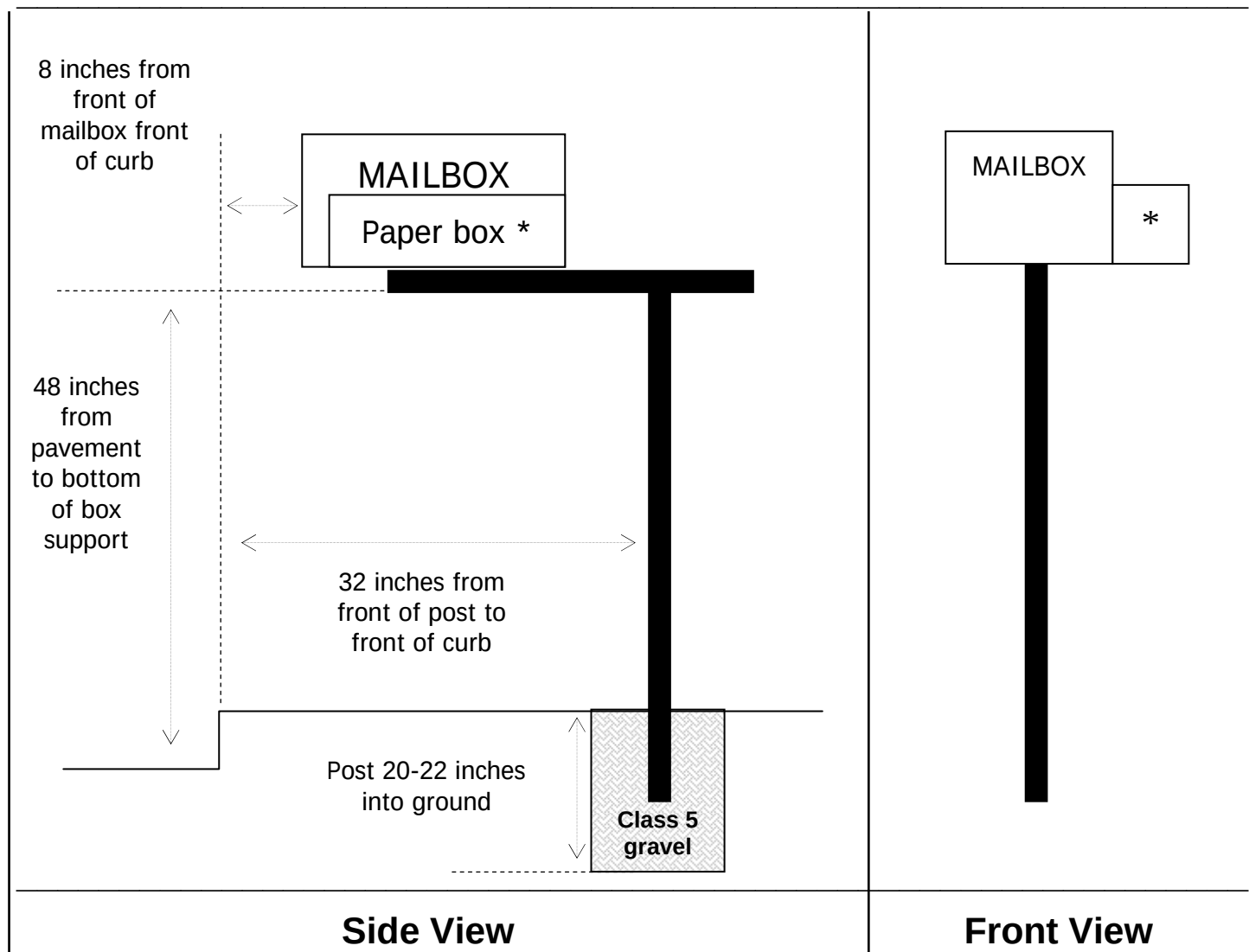


EXHIBIT B

City and postal installation requirements for mailboxes



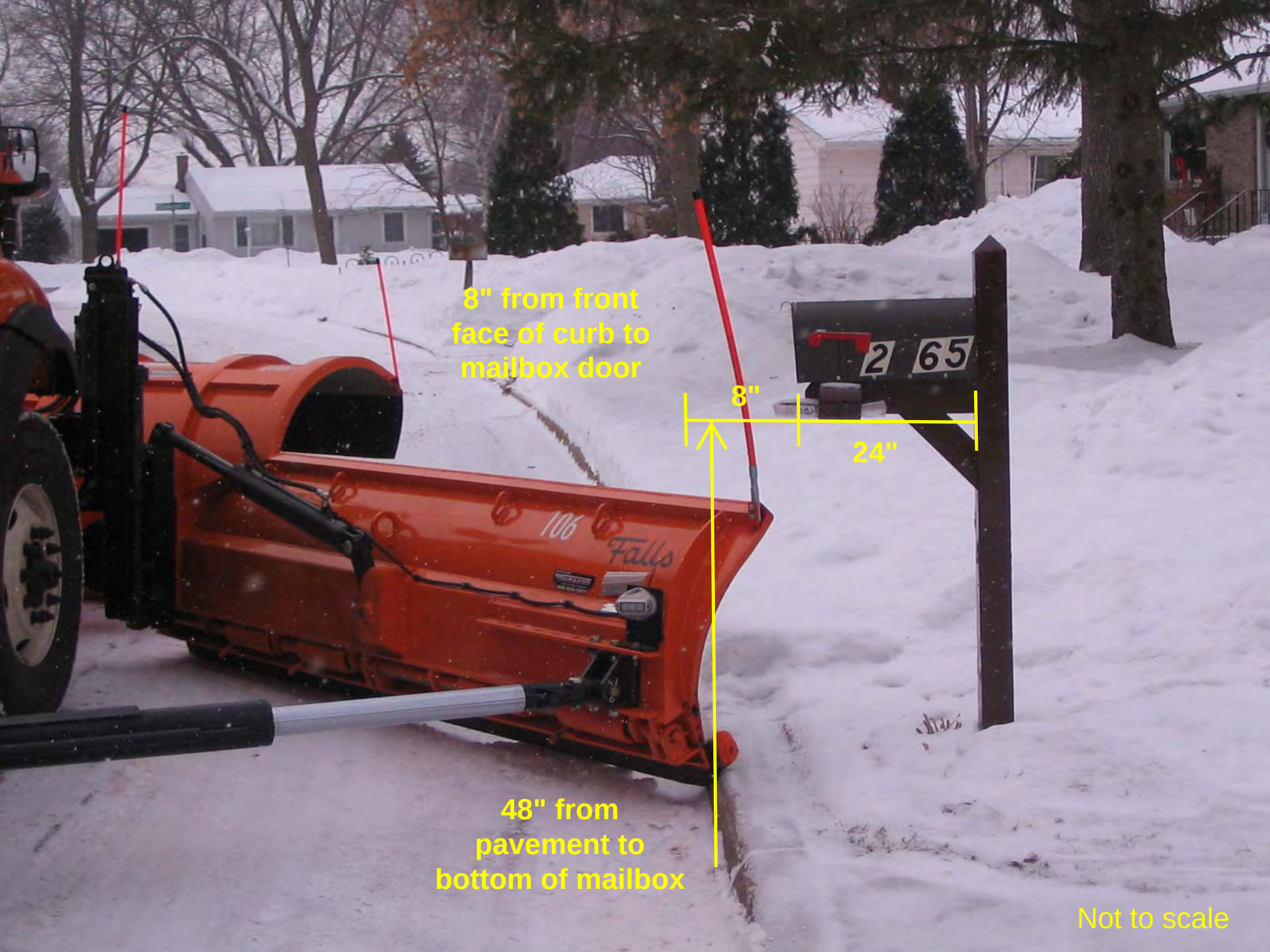
MAILBOX STANDARD INSTALLATION



(Not to scale)

NOTES:

- Box must be located so carrier can serve without leaving vehicle.
- Have box extend as far in front of support post as possible, but 8 inches from front of curb.
- Address must be on side of box from which carrier approaches in letters about 1" high. (Or on front where boxes are grouped.)



8" from front
face of curb to
mailbox door

8"

24"

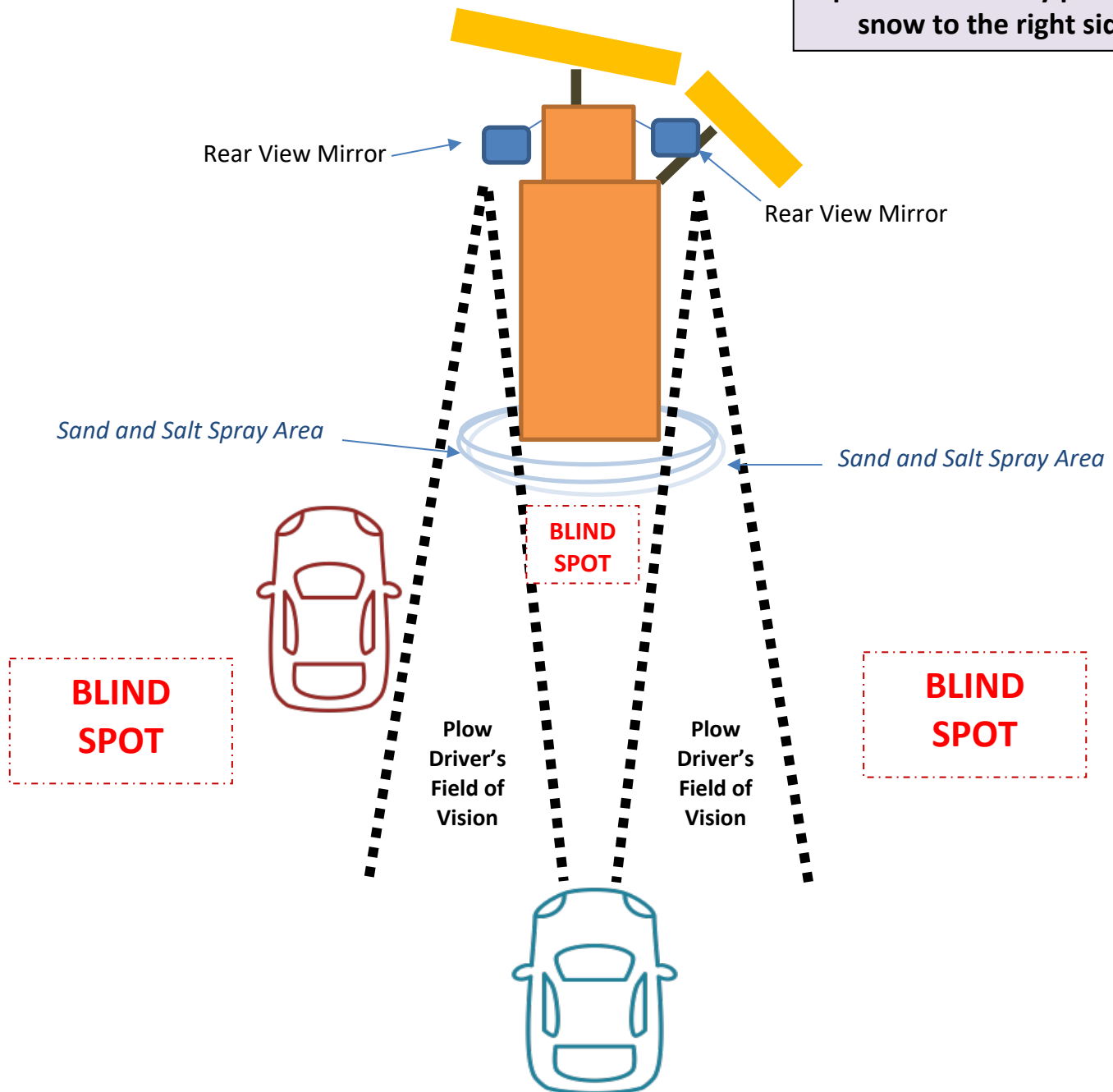
48" from
pavement to
bottom of mailbox

Not to scale

**Do NOT assume plow drivers can see you.
Their field of vision is limited!**

**Use extreme caution when
passing a plow.**

**Never pass on the right,
plows are usually pushing
snow to the right side**



STAY BACK 200 FEET FROM THE SNOW PLOW & EQUIPMENT
If you can't see the plows mirrors, the driver cannot see you.