

PUBLIC WORKS

Keep Leaves Off the Ground & Out of Storm Drains

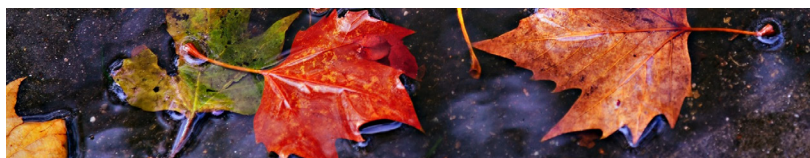
By, Jeremy Gumke, Public Works Director

Leaves left to accumulate on the ground can have negative effects on the health of local waterways. Street and yard flooding, litter dams, and algae growth can occur when leaves block/enter the storm drain. To combat this, keep leaves and yard debris out of the storm drains by raking, bagging, or composting. The purpose of the storm drain, or catch basin, is to collect the rain water and melted snow— not leaves, trash, or other pollutants. Here's what happens when fallen leaves are left untended:

- Leaves that fall to the ground inevitably accumulate at the mouth of stormwater drains and ditches, causing dams that capture leaves and litter.
- These pollutants clog up storm drains and ditches causing street flooding (even with light or moderate rainfall).
- Once the leaves in the storm drain begin to decay, they release nutrients that contribute to excess algae growth in the waterways.
- Algae growth uses up dissolved oxygen needed by aquatic wildlife and can result in a decline in their population.

Good to Do:

- Pick up after your pet! Pet waste can end up in storm drains, area streams, rivers, and lakes, thus polluting the water we recreate in and harming aquatic life with high levels of nitrogen and bacteria
- Clean up your leaves and yard debris.
- Check with your refuse hauler to learn when leaves will be collected and how they should be stored (bagging, placement, etc.) and only place leaves and yard debris out at the designated time.
- Do not rake or blow leaves into the street where they can be washed into the storm drain.
- Consider using the leaves as mulch, mowing over them and leaving the finely-chopped debris on your yard.
- If you choose to compost your leaves, contain your compost in a bin.
- Never dump leaves or yard debris into ditches, streams, or other waterways. ■



Sidewalk Snow Clearing

One of the many challenges residents and the Public Works Department (PW) face in the winter is clearing snow and ice from public sidewalks. Clearing snow along sidewalks, crosswalks, and pedestrian ramps is essential to ensuring walking is practical, safe, and comfortable in the winter. We aim to maintain year-round walking infrastructure by ensuring the clearing of snow is completed in a timely fashion. According to City Code 92.01(B)(1), the owner and occupant of any property adjacent to a public sidewalk shall use diligence to keep the walk safe for pedestrians; snow, ice, dirt, or rubbish is not to remain on the walk longer than 24 hours after its deposit thereon. The PW clears public sidewalks as part of the regular snow removal program with specialized equipment. As a general rule, the PW does not apply rock salt to sidewalks as it may eventually find its way into lakes, rivers, and other water bodies and cause environmental damage. Additionally, rock salt can cause concrete deterioration and harm plants, trees, wildlife, and pets. If an application of salt is necessary to remove accumulated snow and ice, residents are encouraged to apply sparingly. As much salt as would fill a coffee mug is enough to treat 250 square feet of pavement. Shoot for a 3-inch spread between salt granules to apply the proper amount of de-icing salt. While bare pavement is not always possible throughout the harsh winter conditions we experience as Minnesotans, diligent and responsible practices for snow and ice removal on sidewalks will help to maintain the goal of walkability for all. ■

Winter Parking & Snow Plowing

By, Jeremy Gumke, Public Works Director



During the winter, the number one priority of the Public Works Department is to clear snow and make City streets safe for traffic and emergency vehicles. Here are a few reminders to assist residents in achieving this goal:

Residents are **not** allowed to park on **any** street for a period of 48 hours, beginning immediately after two (2) inches or more of continuous snowfall, or until the snow removal has been completed from curb to curb.

We know that snow removal may not correlate with residents' snow shoveling schedules. The drivers do their best to avoid pushing windrows of snow back

onto freshly shoveled driveways or sidewalks.

Remember it is dangerous for children to dig tunnels in the windrows of snow created by the snow plows. Tunnels can cave in, smothering the child. Plow drivers can't see children playing in or around the windrows and they can be covered or trapped in the snow. Other ways to assist with snow removal operations include:

- Don't place refuse or recycling containers in the street; and
- Don't plow, blow or shovel snow into the street; and
- When shoveling, pile snow downstream of the plowing operations to minimize snow left in your driveway; and
- Stay back when driving behind plow trucks.

With your cooperation, snow removal can be more efficient. If you have any questions regarding snow plowing procedures, contact Jeremy Gumke by email at jeremy.gumke@savmn.com or at 612-782-3441. ■