

0:0:0.0 --> 0:0:9.640

Wendy (Guest)

We're focusing on getting around in winter. Joining me today is Glen Inglis and Jag Denzel. Both public works supervisors for Guelph. So welcome to you both.

0:0:10.960 --> 0:0:11.490

Jagwinder Dhensa

Hi, Wendy.

0:0:11.50 --> 0:0:11.520

Glen Inglis

Thank you.

0:0:12.330 --> 0:0:28.40

Wendy (Guest)

So by now we've had a little taste of winter. Uh, maybe we could start by getting a definition of how you know, how you guys declare things. So say it's a significant weather event. What exactly would that be and when do you declare that?

0:0:29.670 --> 0:0:59.760

Jagwinder Dhensa

So Wendy, a significant weather event is declared after we received more than 8 centimeters of snow. But it's not just snow only. It might be a freezing rain event or a significant flooding event or even heavy winds because the heavy winds sometimes cause drifting on the roadway that we need to clear. So if we've declared as a significant weather event, sorry, it may take us longer than usual to clear the roads, bike lanes and sidewalks. So do we just ask that you get?

0:0:59.900 --> 0:1:19.110

Jagwinder Dhensa

That the city, the city wait until we've declared the significant weather event is over before submitting a service request, or even just calling into the operations line. And just a reminder that all on street parking is also cancelled for significant weather event to help us clear the streets.

0:1:20.110 --> 0:1:29.260

Wendy (Guest)

So whether it's significant or just what we call a regular snowfall, I guess I'm what's your priority list as to which roads you do first?

0:1:30.790 --> 0:1:44.130

Glen Inglis

So all the roads are prioritized in sequence according to how busy they are and what the posted speed limit is. So main arterial roads get the primary response and then secondary roads, and then all the residential streets after that.

0:1:45.90 --> 0:1:52.310

Glen Inglis

Uh, usually, once in events over then we can remove snow from the bridge decks and the cul de sacs and the downtown area.

0:1:53.240 --> 0:1:59.750

Glen Inglis

But that's the basically those three arrangements of the sequence of how we get into our roads.

0:2:0.710 --> 0:2:6.420

Wendy (Guest)

And then from there, how do you decide where to go in neighborhoods per se?

0:2:7.440 --> 0:2:22.530

Glen Inglis

We we found we have, we've different sections of neighborhoods, so it's 8 sections and typically we'll have a piece of equipment in each section is what we try to do. And so everything is getting plowed at the same time, in a sense as far as what section their house is in.

0:2:23.680 --> 0:2:47.380

Wendy (Guest)

Now I know of every everybody wants, you know, when's my street gonna be done? And and you know, we don't really understand all the the planning that goes into it. So I know you can't, you know specifically say how long, but generally speaking, how long would it take you to get through the whole city say that, you know, the snowfall started, but it wasn't continuing.

0:2:48.680 --> 0:2:54.710

Glen Inglis

It's typical snowfall that we haven't declared an event for. We we'll try and get through the entire city within 24 hours.

0:2:55.780 --> 0:2:56.580

Wendy (Guest)

It's pretty good.

0:2:57.580 --> 0:2:57.830

Wendy (Guest)

Yeah.

0:2:56.870 --> 0:3:4.340

Glen Inglis

Umm, there are some criteria that we follow some regulated criteria and and basically that's what we're following so.

0:3:5.460 --> 0:3:8.240

Wendy (Guest)

Are there any roads in Guelph that you don't clear?

0:3:9.20 --> 0:3:20.530

Glen Inglis

There is a road one Rd in Guelph that is a material Ministry Rd Hwy 6 or the Halen Expressway and that's taken care of completely by the Ministry of Transportation of Ontario. So that's a common question.

0:3:21.580 --> 0:3:23.870

Glen Inglis

Where our plows are not on that highway, plowing.

0:3:24.730 --> 0:3:28.560

Wendy (Guest)

Can I ask you how many plows, et cetera you have in Guelph?

0:3:29.550 --> 0:3:30.520

Glen Inglis

Yeah, we have.

0:3:32.600 --> 0:3:37.490

Glen Inglis

15 to 16 Rd plows. We have a fleet of tractors with plows on them.

0:3:39.440 --> 0:3:45.130

Glen Inglis

The trucks are also equipped to dispense liquid salt brine directly on the road or treat rock salt.

0:3:45.970 --> 0:3:54.30

Glen Inglis

Umm, we also have a large 4 wheel loaders that are equipped with plows and wings that can assist on arterial roads, secondary roads end.

0:3:55.60 --> 0:4:0.30

Glen Inglis

Some of the residential roads and then we have blowers to get into if we need those too.

0:4:5.570 --> 0:4:6.70

Glen Inglis

They do.

0:4:1.430 --> 0:4:6.870

Wendy (Guest)

So they do they sit like in a central yard, kind of waiting, or do you have them OK?

0:4:7.130 --> 0:4:9.10

Glen Inglis

Yeah. Everything sits at our public works yard.

0:4:9.760 --> 0:4:10.730

Glen Inglis

Waiting to deploy.

0:4:10.520 --> 0:4:12.50

Wendy (Guest)

Waiting for the bat signal.

0:4:12.280 --> 0:4:12.890

Glen Inglis

You got it.

0:4:13.980 --> 0:4:19.100

Wendy (Guest)

So what about sidewalks? You mentioned that you do clear them. Do you prioritize those as well?

0:4:20.290 --> 0:4:35.720

Jagwinder Dhensa

Uh yes, Wendy? UM, we we prior prioritize them from the difference of high priority and residential. So the high priority sidewalks are service after 4 centimeters of snow accumulation and the residential get serviced after 8 centimeters of snow.

0:4:37.180 --> 0:4:38.80

Wendy (Guest)

No, do you?

0:4:39.380 --> 0:4:46.400

Wendy (Guest)

You mentioned, I think, Glen, that you use a salt. So are you a salt only or do you have a salt sand or how's that work?

0:4:47.820 --> 0:5:6.970

Glen Inglis

We do have sand available and it's typically salt is going on our our main roads salt we'll use in different circumstances depending on what the condition of the road is and where it is to. But typically it's salt salt only that's going on the roads mainly on the main roads too to melt.

0:5:8.320 --> 0:5:11.890

Wendy (Guest)

And if you know a storm is coming, is that when you do that brine?

0:5:12.490 --> 0:5:29.260

Glen Inglis

Exactly. That's exactly what we do it. So that's called pretreatment or direct liquid and we can brine brine a lot of the city. We have four tanks plus some smaller ones that we have areas that we have identified that would they're most advantageous to get the stuff in there, so.

0:5:29.550 --> 0:5:44.900

Wendy (Guest)

Umm, now Jag you had mentioned when you're doing sidewalks and bike lanes, etcetera that you need the motoring public's help in that. Could you kind of run over some of the bylaws and the rules and what would help you when you guys are trying to get out there and get things cleared?

0:5:46.950 --> 0:6:18.100

Jagwinder Dhensa

Yeah. We typically just ask that, you know, after the four center mirrors of snow accumulations are our

main roadways will be getting the main sidewalks will be getting treated. So we just asked that the public just stay alert and we're we're alert to you know, but we try to get out there a little bit earlier than the public gets out there. So you'll see us in the early mornings trying to just make sure that the walkways to the school ways are clear. And you know, just like anywhere around the bus stops, we try to clear those as well and we get help clearing the bus stop. So.

0:6:18.360 --> 0:6:48.250

Jagwinder Dhensa

If you see any any of the yellow machines that are out there or even they're green as well, if you see them out there, we just kindly ask if you can just step aside and let them go through and then they'll make your walk a little bit easier and and also when we do have the snow event, if you can just wait, you know, I understand that you want your sidewalk cleared right away. However, we have the area split up into like 11 zones, just like how the roadways are split up. We have our sidewalks split up to 11 zones. So I mean, they're all out there.

0:6:48.320 --> 0:6:57.80

Jagwinder Dhensa

During the mains and they have their residential as well. So we asked just give us some time, but if there is an emergency or if you do see something that's serious, then you could always call it in.

0:6:57.940 --> 0:7:1.230

Wendy (Guest)

I assume you don't allow overnight parking in the winter.

0:7:4.840 --> 0:7:6.600

Wendy (Guest)

The city, I don't know. Is that true or?

0:7:9.760 --> 0:7:10.410

Wendy (Guest)

Ohh.

0:7:6.420 --> 0:7:12.570

Glen Inglis

We did. Overnight parking is allowed on certain streets, but generally speaking, no overnight parking is not allowed.

0:7:12.760 --> 0:7:16.490

Wendy (Guest)

Just because it makes it almost impossible for you to do it right.

0:7:16.670 --> 0:7:25.420

Glen Inglis

It's impossible, and yeah, that's uh. When we, especially when we declare an event, we ask we we'll put it out there and ask everybody to make sure they're cars off the road so.

0:7:26.200 --> 0:7:33.120

Glen Inglis

Just to make it easier, there are some circumstances where even the designated parking streets, we will sign them off where we need to move that snow.

0:7:34.260 --> 0:7:40.270

Wendy (Guest)

I'm just curious what we're tumble sidewalks. What do you use for a sidewalk? Is that when you use the snow blowers? Or how does that work?

0:7:40.970 --> 0:8:0.620

Jagwinder Dhensa

Uh, so sometimes we do use those snow blowers if we have to clear out some areas, but typically we have approximately 12 to 16 pieces of equipment. There are sidewalk trackless machines and tractors that are out there and they're yellow in color and the tractors are green and black. So you'll see them out there this winter.

0:8:1.750 --> 0:8:13.880

Wendy (Guest)

So sometimes you know in a really bad uh snowstorm or like you said, freezing rain event, you need to halt operations. I know that probably doesn't happen that often, but when might it happen and what do you do about it?

0:8:17.400 --> 0:8:22.210

Glen Inglis

So we're not halting operations where it will be continuous response until everything's cleared up.

0:8:23.870 --> 0:8:42.490

Glen Inglis

However, a significant weather event fits declared it it, we have more time to do that and we'll need more time to do that. So again, I'll reiterate with Jag said just to just to have people look out for what's out there and look out for us and where we're trying, we're always trying. There's always equipment on the road, so we,

0:8:41.990 --> 0:8:45.690

Wendy (Guest)

Yeah, you never had to, like, pull them off. How? We've heard that in other places.

0:8:56.590 --> 0:8:56.990

Wendy (Guest)

Uh-huh.

0:8:45.660 --> 0:9:0.270

Glen Inglis

there's been times where perhaps it's a Blizzard happening, and if it's not safe on a certain Rd, the response for maybe that one route will be, you know, everybody pull over to a safe area. That's pretty rare. We're out there. We're the ones out there when nobody else is.

0:9:1.30 --> 0:9:5.70

Glen Inglis

But if it's a Blizzard and there's zero visibility, then obviously the call is to be.

0:9:8.130 --> 0:9:8.510

Wendy (Guest)

Right.

0:9:6.190 --> 0:9:8.780

Glen Inglis

Stay off the road till we can see. That's the only time.

0:9:9.340 --> 0:9:21.780

Wendy (Guest)

Right. So if there's an issue to report, like, say, a sidewalk damage or maybe something happens to a Blvd, can residents is there a a number or a website that they can report that to?

0:9:22.350 --> 0:9:52.190

Jagwinder Dhensa

Yes, Wendy, uh, there is the three ways actually to report issues or damages. You can call the operations line which is 5198269771. That's 5198269771 or you can e-mail us at operations at [guelph.ca](mailto:operations@guelph.ca). Again, that's operations at Guelph dot TA or you can visit our website to create a service request which would get pushed over to our admin staff and then direct it to the correct staff.

0:9:53.360 --> 0:10:3.310

Wendy (Guest)

I was just curious if you have that system, Umm some cities do where you can track a snow plow and basically see where it is and if it's coming near you. Do you guys have that?

0:10:4.370 --> 0:10:8.170

Glen Inglis

We do. We do, Wendy. It's called plow tracker. It's easy to search.

0:10:8.960 --> 0:10:19.190

Glen Inglis

It is under construction. We're updating it at the moment, so we plan on a bit of a new format, what from what people are used to and that should become an online pretty soon I would think.

0:10:19.850 --> 0:10:32.760

Wendy (Guest)

And when that does, can you kind of just run us through, uh, what you see like, is it kind of like, you know, uh, like, ordering food. I see my little man coming. My little driver coming or how does that work?

0:10:31.590 --> 0:11:0.340

Glen Inglis

The new? Yeah. Fair enough. The old format. What people are used to is it. It's it's just like that. It's a dot with a. It's an arrow in our case. And I think the blue arrows represented plow trucks. The brown arrows represented sidewalk plows. The new format, I believe, looks a little different, though, and it might show

a routes more than what the where the plow is. It might show more of a completion and, but it might also show the plow trucks too. So.

0:11:0.440 --> 0:11:6.640

Glen Inglis

There is. You can either tell when your route is done or in progress, or actually where the plow truck is so.

0:11:7.310 --> 0:11:12.380

Wendy (Guest)

Have you had a lot of feedback on that? I would assume that's pretty positive for the public.

0:11:13.510 --> 0:11:31.80

Glen Inglis

Yeah. Oh, yeah. It's it's. It's a definitely a main. It's a main hit when people are are wondering what's going on with their road and there's lots. Lots of feedback on it. So it's something I think now our GIS teams expanding on and we're going to make it look better and maybe be more useful for the public's. Definitely very popular.

0:11:32.450 --> 0:11:37.50

Wendy (Guest)

I've also heard of a programming Guelph called Snow Angels. Can you explain that?

0:11:38.270 --> 0:12:8.400

Jagwinder Dhensa

Yes, uh, this is a program that offers the volunteer Snow removal service for eligible seniors and persons with physical disabilities and residents who are eligible to receive this service. They must reside in the city of Guelph in a single dwelling or semi detached house with a private driveway and are unable to remove their own snow or cannot afford to pay for snow removal and have no able bodied person living in the household to shovel snow also.

0:12:8.560 --> 0:12:31.210

Jagwinder Dhensa

Another criteria is you have to be a senior citizen age 65 years or older and or have a physical disability and to apply for this program you can call 5198221155 or e-mail snow angels at Volunteer Guelph Wellington dot on dot CA.

0:12:32.450 --> 0:12:39.180

Wendy (Guest)

OK, I'm just curious how many employees you have UM in public works that?

0:12:39.860 --> 0:12:41.360

Wendy (Guest)

Do the winter clearing.

0:12:42.360 --> 0:12:42.890

Wendy (Guest)

If you know.

0:12:44.50 --> 0:12:52.440

Glen Inglis

I've got a. We have around 60 full time employees and then another 40 to 50 temporary employees that we're we're hiring now and throughout the winter.

0:12:53.930 --> 0:13:4.410

Wendy (Guest)

Uh biggest challenge. I'm sure that it's not the most appropriate. I mean it's it's appreciated, but at the time, people are always, you know, appreciative of what you're doing.

0:13:5.570 --> 0:13:8.460

Wendy (Guest)

What's the biggest challenge for winter clearing?

0:13:11.510 --> 0:13:36.730

Glen Inglis

Well, I'd say one of the biggest challenges is kind of just what you said. It's just informing the public of where we are and what we're doing and we haven't given up and we're always out there. We're fully staffed and just got to show patients and understand that we're trying to get things cleared up. So the challenges are out there. You know, it depends on how much snow and where we are and what we're doing. But as long as people have understanding and.

0:13:37.770 --> 0:13:39.170

Glen Inglis

We'll get there. We always do.

0:13:40.170 --> 0:13:45.580

Wendy (Guest)

I guess being Canada, we just have to know it's coming and be prepared the best we can, right.

0:13:46.320 --> 0:13:59.810

Glen Inglis

Yeah, always the 1st events or the first snows are the the most shocking to everybody and people forget about their tires and different things. And you know, just understand that there's there's gonna be snow on the road and eventually you'll be gone. So.

0:14:0.150 --> 0:14:7.320

Wendy (Guest)

Yeah, I think currently that's probably what everybody's doing is winter changeover. Cause I know all the garages are just really busy.

0:14:7.650 --> 0:14:8.980

Glen Inglis

Working on their tires? That's right.

0:14:8.770 --> 0:14:26.160

Wendy (Guest)

Yeah, everybody wants their tires done for sure. So yeah. So Umm, I guess just kind of to recap some of

that for people. So the thing to know is the equipments ready to go all the time and and you have your priority list.

0:14:27.30 --> 0:14:27.380

Wendy (Guest)

Right.

0:14:28.690 --> 0:14:32.720

Glen Inglis

That's right. Yeah. Equipment is on is here all the time. We are staffed 24/7.

0:14:33.440 --> 0:14:39.270

Glen Inglis

Including on the weekends, including through Christmas and UH. And we're prepared. We're prepared for anything.

0:14:40.850 --> 0:14:46.80

Wendy (Guest)

It's it's a hard job, I would think. I mean, it's not fun to be called out in all kinds of weather.

0:14:47.900 --> 0:14:57.700

Glen Inglis

It's true, but our our Staffs, the full time staff is most of them have been doing it for years and and they look forward to it come this time of year, they're off the road. They're not doing construction anymore and.

0:14:58.830 --> 0:15:4.600

Glen Inglis

And it's a new it's a new challenge. It's a new beginning every fall and every end of the winter and.

0:15:5.970 --> 0:15:13.140

Glen Inglis

Yeah, it if you're geared into it and your mind's had towards it. And we're thinking about it, it's, you know, it's not as difficult as we think sometimes, so.

0:15:14.690 --> 0:15:15.440

Glen Inglis

Priced to the work.

0:15:14.790 --> 0:15:21.840

Wendy (Guest)

So Jake can. Ohh, that's good Jag. Could you run down on the websites that you mentioned earlier and the phone numbers for people?

0:15:22.770 --> 0:15:54.0

Jagwinder Dhensa

Yeah, for sure, Wendy. So if you have any issues with your sidewalks or damage to the Boulevard, you can call our operations aligned at 5198269791 or e-mail us at operations at [guelph.ca](mailto:operations@guelph.ca) or you can also

visit the website to create a service request, which will get forwarded to our admin staff. And then also if you were looking to apply for the Snow Angels program, you can call 5198221155.

0:15:54.160 --> 0:16:3.110

Jagwinder Dhensa

Or e-mail snow angels with an S at volunteer Guelph Wellington dot on dot CA.

0:16:4.220 --> 0:16:12.600

Wendy (Guest)

OK. And have I forgotten anything, maybe just you know when your day-to-day thing you think of. Oh yeah, we wish we could tell people this or remind people of that.

0:16:14.120 --> 0:16:29.210

Jagwinder Dhensa

No, just a thank you to all the City of Guelph for our residence and I know sometimes residents get out there and they clear their sidewalks right away and they clear their neighbors and we thank them for that because sometimes it does take us a little bit longer to get there. But we think the City of Guelph and the residents.

0:16:30.180 --> 0:16:38.30

Wendy (Guest)

Is the plow gonna go by and put the snow back in my driveway? I know that's a totally unfair question, but you know, everybody thinks that.

0:16:36.940 --> 0:16:59.580

Jagwinder Dhensa

Yes, yeah, yes, unfortunately it does, but it's not done on on purpose, Wendy. It's it's just the nature of the plow, the it's kind of V blade. So it's when it's pushing it, you are gonna get a little bit of residual snow coming off of it just the way it's the nature of the game. But if there is something that is blocking your driveway like a bigger, bolder, just call us back and we'll we'll come out there right away.

0:16:59.940 --> 0:17:9.120

Wendy (Guest)

Oh, that's good to know too. I I think everybody is. You can kind of handle snow. But man, when that freezing rain hits, that's the worst. That's gotta be the hardest.

0:17:11.650 --> 0:17:12.120

Jagwinder Dhensa

Yep.

0:17:11.390 --> 0:17:16.0

Glen Inglis

Yeah, definitely freezing rain is challenge. Again, work. We're equipped for it, so.

0:17:17.340 --> 0:17:44.0

Glen Inglis

Just one more thing, Wendy. I'd like to mention is there is a function on the city website that you can actually thank a plow driver. And if you just Google those words and Guelph, you can do that. And I'd

like just the the residents of Guelph to know that that doesn't go unnoticed and I often will print off those thank yous and put it in a booklet and have it sitting on the crew, the crew room, desks and their lunch tables and stuff. So that's a popular thing for us. When we get thanked and it doesn't go unnoticed. So.

0:17:44.680 --> 0:18:4.500

Wendy (Guest)

I love that because you know, it's one of those things, like, you know what? When after it's happening you ohh. They did a good job, but you kind of forget in the moment to be appreciative. So let me thank you and all those who are doing all that digging out and the clearing it all the hours to keep us all moving. So thank you both to Glen and Jag for all the great information.

0:18:5.560 --> 0:18:6.140

Glen Inglis

Thanks, Wendy.

0:18:6.110 --> 0:18:7.150

Jagwinder Dhensa

No problem. Thank you, Wendy.

0:20:37.850 --> 0:21:2.310

Wendy (Guest)

Welcome to Big G in conversation, the podcast from Inside Guelph City Hall. Hi, I'm Wendy King and on today's show, we're talking with staff from public works to discuss getting around during the winter season. We'll learn about the equipment used to clear snow away from sidewalks and roadways, what to do during significant weather events, and how it's determined which areas get cleared first.