



Town of Huntsville
Winter Operations Update
February 25th, 2026

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Winter Operations Overview

- 26 Winter Operations Employees
- 24-Hour Coverage
- 3 Shift Rotation:
 - 4:00AM – 12:00PM
 - 12:00PM – 8:00 PM
 - 8:00PM – 4:00AM
- Fully compliant with Minimum Maintenance Standards

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Service Area & Routes

- 10 Winter Runs
 - 9 Sand Runs
 - 1 Salt Run
 - Routes take approximately 10-12 hours to complete
- 380 km of municipal roads maintained
- 23 Parking Lots
- 7 Laneways

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Winter Activity to Date

- 47 Snow Events requiring plowing and sanding
- 4,321 Plowing Hours logged
- *Note: Does not include additional sanding/salting-only responses*

Material Usage (To Date)

- 532 Tonnes of Salt Used
- 8,600 Tonnes of Sand Used

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Why We Use Salt on Our Priority Salt Run

Purpose: Maintain Safe, Bare Pavement on High-Priority Routes

- Prevents ice from bonding to pavement
- Improves plowing effectiveness
- Reduces hard-packed snow buildup
- Provides quicker return to bare pavement
- Supports compliance with Minimum Maintenance Standards (MMS)

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Why Priority Routes?

- Higher traffic volumes
- Emergency services access
- Main arterial roads and key connectors
- Greater safety risk if left snow-covered
- When temperatures are too cold for salt, a sand/salt mix (sweet load) or pre-treatment will be applied

Our priority salt run focuses on higher volume and critical routes. Salt allows us to prevent ice bonding and return these roads to bare pavement faster, which supports emergency response, traffic flow, and compliance with MMS timelines.

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Why We Use Sand

Purpose: Provide Traction in Cold Temperatures

- Provides immediate grip for vehicles
- Effective at all temperatures
- Essential during extreme cold when salt loses effectiveness
- Improves safety on hills, intersections, and curves
- More suitable for lower-volume roads

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Operational Benefits

- Reliable in very cold conditions
- Cost-effective for local and rural roads
- Sand does not melt ice, it provides traction

Right Material. Right Road. Right Conditions.

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Snow Removal – Why and When We Do It

Why We Remove Snow

- Maintains safe travel widths on roads
- Preserves sightlines at intersections
- Improves pedestrian safety near sidewalks and crossings
- Protects drainage capacity for spring melt
- Prevents narrowing of lanes and loss of parking
- Supports long-term road safety and operations

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When We Remove Snow

- After multiple snow events causing snowbank buildup
- When lane widths fall below safe standards
- When visibility at intersections becomes restricted
- When storage space along roads is exhausted
- In preparation for additional forecasted snow

Plowing pushes snow aside, but over time snowbanks build up. When road widths narrow, visibility decreases, or drainage becomes restricted, we initiate snow removal operations. This is typically triggered after multiple events or when snow storage capacity along the roadway is reached.

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Recent Temperature Fluctuations

- Over the last month we have experienced significant fluctuations in temperature
- Requires more sanding and salting cycles
- Higher material usage
- Increased overtime and equipment wear
- Higher collision risk and public exposure

Temperature volatility is increasing operational costs and infrastructure strain, requiring proactive planning, adequate reserve funding, and strategic investment in winter maintenance programs.

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Summary

- Continuous 24-hour service delivery
- Significant winter activity this season (declared 1 significant weather event)
- Maintaining compliance with provincial standards
- Ongoing commitment to road safety and service reliability

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