

Wednesday, Dec. 16, 2020

Mayor's Update

Winter is here. Our best forecasts show a long, powerful storm hitting Newton around 11:00 tonight, leaving from 8 to 12 inches or more of snow before the sky clears on Thursday afternoon or even early evening. The heaviest snowfall is expected to begin at midnight and continue through the traditional morning commuter hours on Thursday, with as much as 1 to 2 inches of snow falling per hour and creating white-out conditions for parts of the night. Winds are expected to gust up to 30 - 45 miles per hour followed by very cold temperatures into Friday and Saturday.



We're no strangers to winter weather here in New England, but in the words of Transportation Secretary (and Newton resident) Stephanie Pollack, this has the potential to be a "whopper of a storm."

Please, stay home.

This year, with COVID-19 already changing operations to keep everyone safe, and health issues impacting crew availability, staying off the roads is even more important than usual.

DPW crews have been out pretreating the roads with brine (you may notice the pavement tinted white) to help prevent icing. They'll be out through the night and

tomorrow clearing Newton's approximately 600 miles of roadway, 80-plus miles of sidewalk the City is responsible for clearing, 43 school and municipal parking lots, 70 school bus stops and MBTA bus stops, T and commuter rail stations. Clearly, it will take quite a lot of time to get roads, sidewalks and parking lots cleared. (Remember, we're also under a COVID-19 stay at home advisory in Massachusetts from 10:00 p.m. – 5:00 a.m.)



Emergency Parking Ban & Closures & Trash/Recycling & Grab and Go Meals

A snow Emergency Parking Ban will begin at midnight tonight. No cars can be parked on the street or in municipal parking lots to allow our DPW crews and contractors to plow effectively. Cars parked illegally can be towed.

In-person classes in the Newton Public Schools are cancelled and all classes will be remote on Thursday.

City Hall will be closed. Posted Zoom government meetings will be held as scheduled tonight and Thursday night.

The Newton Free Library will also be closed on Thursday. Don't have a library card? Apply [here](#) for immediate access to digital services. You can also "Dial a Story" at 617-796-1415 for a recording of a short children's story read aloud.

The Senior Center will continue to be closed (as it has been because of COVID-19). Virtual programs will continue as scheduled and the staff is working remotely.

Trash and recycling will be pushed back one day, so the Thursday route will be collected on Friday, and Friday's route will be collected on Saturday. The Resource Recovery Center at Rumford Avenue will also be closed on Thursday.

The Grab & Go meal program is cancelled for Thursday as well. We expect it to be back open on Friday. On Wednesday (today) people were given an extra lunch and breakfast in preparation for the storm. (FYI: Since April 30 through last Friday, we've provided 293,754 meals.)

With significant snow and wind expected, we might have downed trees and limbs causing power outages. If your power goes out, report it directly to Eversource [here](#), or call 877-659-6326. Stay away from all downed power lines, and if you see downed wires, call 911.

If you need other assistance, please call Customer Service at 617-796-1000. Please leave a message on this line and someone will call you back. You can also use the 311 app on your smart phone or computer.

As always, in an emergency, call 911 immediately.

Again, please, stay home.



Sidewalk Shoveling Ordinance

Sidewalk snow shoveling rules are also in effect.

Under the ordinance passed by the City Council last year, property owners need to clear the sidewalk in front of their property within 24 hours of a storm's end (the timeline can be extended if conditions warrant – information will be posted on the website).

Property owners will receive one warning per winter before receiving a fine if their sidewalk is left uncleared and is reported into the City's 311 system. City employees will respond to the called-in complaints, take a photo of the violation, and issue a warning or fines. Fines are \$50 and will be repeated every 24 hours until the sidewalk is cleared.

We receive Newton-specific weather forecasts twice daily, and our latest update this afternoon shows temperatures falling into the teens Thursday and over the next several days. If this storm proceeds as predicted, it will be a tough one to clear because of the quantity and the cold temperatures. If you're able, please try and clear your sidewalk several times over the course of the storm to stay ahead of the big accumulation.

Contractors are also responsible for making sure the snow they clear from parking lots or private property is not pushed onto a sidewalk or into the street. If you see a City Contractor do this, please call 311 and report it so it can be cleared. If you witness a private contractor pushing snow onto a sidewalk or into the street, please call the police. The contractor can be fined.

Our City plows will be making several passes along streets as the snow falls to make sure roads at first are passable, and then widening them from the center toward the curb or the edge of pavement to allow safe two-way traffic. As we all know, this sometimes means snow that we as residents have already cleared is pushed back into our driveways and onto our sidewalks. It's frustrating. I understand and empathize. I also know that if DPW doesn't do it this way, we'll be left with roads that are dangerous for drivers, pedestrians and bicyclists.

Let's look out for our neighbors, lend a hand if we can, and as we've been doing all year, get through this together. Consider shoveling out a neighbor or checking in on someone who may be alone.

Warmly,

Ruthanne



Mayor Ruthanne Fuller | 1000 Commonwealth Avenue, Newton, MA 02459

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