

Best Management Practices for Disposal of Snow Accumulations from Roadways and Parking Lots

Purpose: These guidelines have been developed to clarify DEEP recommendations to state and municipal officials, and others regarding the removal and disposal of snow accumulations from roadways and parking lots. For purposes of this guidance snow accumulations refers to snow banks and snowpiles that are removed by front-end loader or by loading on trucks for disposal. This guidance does not apply to normal snow plowing operations that must, inevitably, discharge some snow into wetlands and watercourses.

Implementation: While following these guidelines does not constitute a permit or authorization, the Department recognizes there is a considerable need for flexibility in implementation of this policy, particularly in emergency situations. There is no intent to interfere with snow plowing operations. Where trucking and snow dumping operations are undertaken the Department recommends these guidelines be followed.

Problem: Current road maintenance activities include removal of snow accumulations from bridges, roads and parking areas for the purpose of providing more space for subsequent snow storms and for ease of travel and parking. Sometimes this snow is moved by truck or with a front-end loader and deposited directly into surface waters of the state including streams, wetlands and Long Island Sound. This practice is not recommended due to the presence of dirt, salt, litter and other debris, which are routinely mixed in the accumulated snow.

Under normal conditions of snowmelt, the majority of these contaminants remains on or next to the paved surface or may be captured in stormwater catch basins. These contaminants can then be swept from streets and bridges or vacuumed from catch basin sumps. However, when accumulated snow is collected and dumped into surface waters, this mixture of snow, sand and debris may smother aquatic life in the bottom of streams and rivers and degrade the aesthetics of the surface water with silt plumes and litter. Large quantities of snow (and the sand and debris) may also cause blockage of storm drainage systems, resulting in increased chance for localized flooding.

Recommended Management Practice: Snow accumulations removed from roadways, bridges, and parking lots should be placed in upland areas only, where sand and other debris will remain after snowmelt for later removal. Care must be exercised not to deposit snow in the following areas:

- freshwater or tidal wetlands or in areas immediately adjacent to such areas where sand and debris may be flushed during rainstorms;
- on top of storm drain catch basins;
- in storm drainage swales;
- on stream or river banks which slope toward the water, where sand and debris can get into the watercourse; and
- in areas immediately adjacent (within at least 100 feet) of private or public drinking water well supplies (due to the possible presence of road salt).

For Governmental Entities: In normal winter conditions, governmental entities should follow the recommended management practices outlined above. In extraordinary winter conditions, the commissioner may, upon public notification, offer governmental entities the flexibility of limited in-water disposal. When such flexibility is offered, governmental entities who have determined that extraordinary circumstances exist where all upland, land-based disposal options have been fully exhausted (i.e., disposal capacity is not available) and snow needs to be removed to meet public safety demands (i.e., clear access ways for police, emergency medical and fire responders), may use certain waterways for snow disposal in accordance with the following conditions:

- Upland storage and disposal of snow (i.e., athletic fields, parks and other flat, open-field sites) and other snow management methods (i.e., snow melting equipment) must be the first alternatives explored and exhausted. Environmentally sensitive areas must be avoided;
- This guidance applies only to snow and ice which is not visibly contaminated with material other than salt and sand from road clearing activities;
- For coastal communities, preference should be given to snow disposal in salt water where available;
- Disposal in rivers or streams must be limited to those water bodies that have adequate flow and mixing and are not prone to ice jams;
- The disposal must occur only in open water in areas that will not interfere with navigation;
- Disposal must be conducted in a manner so as to prevent ice dam formation or damage to bridges, docks or other structures;
- Disposal in ponds and lakes is discouraged;
- There shall be no disposal in coastal or freshwater wetlands, eelgrass beds, vegetated shallows, vernal pools, shellfish beds mudflats, public water supply reservoirs and their tributaries, or others areas designated as being environmentally sensitive;
- The activity must comply with local laws and requirements;
- Precautions must be taken to avoid shoreline or stream bank damage or erosion from truck/equipment activity; and
- Governmental entities must notify the Department by email (address email to kevin.sowa@ct.gov) prior to disposing of snow and ice in waterways or, if advance notification is not possible, then the Department must be contacted as soon as possible after snow disposal has begun.

Notification: Notification can be made by addressing an email to Kevin Sowa at: kevin.sowa@ct.gov. The notification must include the following: (1) the name of the governmental entity making the notification; (2) contact information for the governmental entity including name, email address and phone number; (3) the street address where the snow disposal activity will occur; (4) the name of the waterbody where the snow will be disposed; (5) the estimated quantity of snow to be disposed; (6) the dates during which the disposal activity will occur; and (7) a statement that the governmental entity has exhausted all disposal alternatives and snow management methods and will make best efforts to adhere to these snow disposal guidelines.

Information: For further information please call the Water Permitting and Enforcement Division Engineer of the Day at 860-424-3025.