



Proper Snow Removal & Storage Limits Waterway Impacts

Pollutants Often Travel Through Snow to Creeks & Rivers

STEAMBOAT SPRINGS, COLORADO-November 29, 2022-With several feet of snow already blanketing the Yampa Valley including nearly a foot overnight and much more to come this winter, it's important to remember that residential and commercial snow removal and storage could have long lasting effects if not done properly.

"Melting snow is stormwater water too. Snow picks up debris, chemicals, and other pollutants that can end up in our streams and river," said Water Resources Manager Julie Baxter. "We're asking everyone to keep this in mind this winter and pay attention to where you put your snow."



Many contractors and residents use powerful machines to assist moving and storing the more than 20 feet of powder on average the city receives in a season. This equipment has the potential to release oil, fuel, or other liquids, which as the snow melts can make its way to local waterways. In addition, de-icing chemicals and salts should be used judiciously. Property owners should apply only what is required to make walkways and driveways safe and never near waterways.

The city requires the following practices to be implemented when plowing and storing snow.

- When piling your snow after shoveling and plowing, choose locations where the snow will have the most opportunity to infiltrate the ground instead of becoming stormwater runoff.
- Do not pile snow on storm drains. Make sure your nearest storm drains are clear.
- Do not pile snow near water bodies and wetlands.
- Do not plow snow directly into a waterway. If plowed snow is allowed to enter a waterway directly or incidentally, it is considered a violation of city's municipal code.
- Snow is allowed to be stored above a stream bank if it is not overflowing into a creek or river.
- As snow storage piles melt, trash must be picked up and disposed of properly.
- Plowing equipment must be maintained to prevent fluid leaks. If leaks are detected, they must be addressed and cleaned up immediately. Drip pans may be necessary for persistent leaks.
- If equipment is being fueled on site, care must be given to prevent spills. If spills occur, they must be cleaned up immediately.

"It's important that we pay attention throughout the winter since these pollutants can have lasting effects on your property as well as our creeks and river," continued Stormwater Specialist and Engineering Inspector Scott Slamal. "It's a long and hopefully snowy season, so we appreciate everyone's help in protecting our watershed."

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