


**Developing Effective Practices for Snow Removal**  
**Why is it Worth all the Effort?**  
 will begin at 2 pm EST.



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## Developing Effective Practices for Snow Removal

Why is it Worth all the Effort?

March 5, 2015

Working together to build accessible communities for all!




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### Meet Your Presenters

Kristi McLaughlin  
Training and Technical  
Assistance Specialist II



Donna Smith  
Director of Training

Easter Seals Project Action Consulting

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### Learner Objectives

- Understand the impact of snow and ice on travel for people with disabilities
- Learn how the ADA applies to snow removal practices
- Explore actions to be taken to establish or improve local practices
- Learn potential roles for advocates in changing local policies and practices

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### The Impact of Snow and Ice on Travel for People with Disabilities

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### Travel Conditions from Snow and Ice

- Slippery surfaces
- Blocked pathways
- Inconsistent clearing of roads and sidewalks
- Makes travel difficult and dangerous for everyone



photo by Dan Burden www.pedbikeimages.org 13

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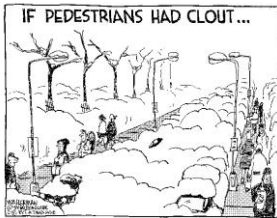
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### If Pedestrians Had Clout



©Dan Wasserman, The Boston Globe

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### Travel Conditions from Snow and Ice (cont.)

Creates significant hazards for people with disabilities who often use public transportation



Photo courtesy of Sarah Green The Rapid

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### Snow and Ice

- Change sound
- Cover landmarks and surfaces
- Hide curbs and curb ramps
- Creates an inconsistent walking path
- Prevent lift and ramp deployment
- Change the familiar landscape

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### Snow Banks

- Lessen visibility
- Block direct path to crosswalks
- Narrow pathways
- Prevent buses from pulling to the curb
- Stay around for a long time

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### The Inequality Factor

- People who drive have access to independent mobility much more quickly than people who use public transportation.
- Able-bodied people using public transportation have access to it much more quickly than do people with disabilities.

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### The Inequality Factor (cont.)

Snow removal practices tend to foster this inequality and sometimes stop before getting around to clearing for access purposes.

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### The ADA and Snow Removal

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### The ADA Requires

- Maintenance of public facilities in operable condition
- Sidewalks and pathways to public transportation to be accessible to and usable by people with disabilities
- Title II, Section 35.133

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### What Does This Mean

When sidewalks and pathways are cleared for pedestrians, they should be cleared to maintain accessibility features at the same time.

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### What public agencies are required to provide accessible pedestrian walkways for persons with disabilities?

- All state and local governmental agencies must comply with ADA Title II. 42 U.S.C. §12131(1).
- Federal, state and local governments must comply with Section 504 standards. 29 U.S.C.
- §794(a). (9-12-06)

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### Can a public agency make private individuals or businesses responsible for ADA and Section 504 mandated pedestrian access?

- No. The public agency is responsible for access for persons with disabilities.

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**What obligation does a public agency have regarding snow removal in its walkways?**

- Walkways must be maintained in an accessible condition with only isolated or temporary interruptions.

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**What day-to-day maintenance is a public agency responsible for under the ADA?**

- Public agencies' day-to-day policies and practices must be such that the public path of travel be kept usable throughout the year.
- This includes snow removal as well as debris removal, maintenance and consideration for work zones and other disruptions.

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**What day-to-day maintenance is a private business or home owner responsible for under the ADA?**

- Minimal to no requirements under the ADA
- Local ordinances may have requirements
- Enforcement is critical to success
- Public entities still have the responsibility for curb ramps and intersections

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## How to Improve Local Snow Removal Policy and Practice

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## Easter Seals Project ACTION Resource

- Effective Snow Removal for Pathways and Transit Stops
  - 24 page booklet
  - Available for download in pdf and rtf
  - <http://www.projectaction.org/ResourcesPublications/AdvancedSearch.aspx> (Search snow removal)

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## Innovative Practices

- Partnership
- Policies and Legislation
- Private Associations
- Community Groups

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### Partnerships

- This could include partnerships between transit agencies and businesses, municipal departments, residents, coalitions, membership organizations, educators, etc.
- There could be formal agreements, hand-shake agreements or anywhere in between.

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### Traverse City, Michigan Partnerships

- LOTS of snow in Michigan
- Bay Area Transportation Authority (BATA) provides more than half a million annual rides.
- BATA secures maintenance agreements with local businesses.
- The business takes responsibility for clearing snow from their designated bus stop.
- In return, BATA provides marketing for the businesses through designated business sponsored stops.

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### Policies and Legislation

- Most municipalities require adjacent property owners or tenants to clear snow and ice
- Enforcing this type of policy can be difficult
- Some communities have put into place snow removal hotlines (often staffed by public works employees)
  - These hotlines allow for reporting of snow or ice blocked pathways
  - They also allow for useful information to be provided to citizens
- Snow storage

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### Policies and Legislation (cont.)

- Design Considerations
  - Space between road and sidewalk for snow storage
  - Type of sidewalk
  - Bus stop accessibility and pad size

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### Cambridge, Mass.

- Densely populated city directly north of Boston
- Has an aggressive snow removal enforcement campaign including webpages, mobile apps, and hotlines
- Property owners are required to remove snow from pathways on and next to their properties within 12 hours of daytime snowfall and by 1pm for snowfall occurring overnight
- The city is responsible for snow removal from 23 miles of public sidewalks

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### Cambridge, Mass.

- They use fines as a means of ensuring compliance with snow removal policies
- The city also has a program in place to help property owners with disabilities that may not be able to clear the snow from their property
  - This includes a program administered by the Council on Aging and the Office of Workforce Development where a list is generated of teenagers willing to provide snow removal services to residents for a cost

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### Medicine Hat, Alberta (Canada)

- Medicine Hat is approximately 185 miles southeast of Calgary
- In 2011, the Municipal Works Department conducted a comprehensive review of the city's snow and ice control program
- The review resulted in many recommendations for the governing entities as well as expectations for the public
- Considered the design of sidewalks to ensure a place to store snow

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### Private Associations

- Private associations include business districts, business associations, community associations and homeowners associations
- Private associations often have their own snow removal policies and procedures
- Occasionally, this includes the maintenance of bus stops and paths of travel to/from bus stops near to them

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### The Downtown Oak Park Business Association

- 10 miles west of the Chicago loop in Illinois
- Partnership between the Oak Park commercial center, Pleasant District and Hemingway District
- Local businesses/retail spaces contract with the DTOP to provide event programming, marketing, streetscape enhancements, grounds maintenance AND snow removal
- DTOP works collaboratively with local government and other agencies to make downtown Oak Park as great as possible
- DTOP also maintains vehicle and bicycle parking at the local transit center

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### The Reston Association

- Located in Fairfax County, Virginia close to D.C.
- 42 miles of pathways owned by the state, 39 miles owned by the county and 187 miles of private or other pathways (private mostly part of HOAs)
- Even though there are no state or county requirements for property owners to clear snow, the paths are nearly always clear
- The Reston Association has a 4-person maintenance team that begins snow removal on all pathways after the first 2 inches of snow and they continue until paths are clear

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### Community Groups

- Coalitions (transportation, walking and biking, livable community, disability rights, neighborhood improvement, etc.) can have big impacts on improving pathways and bus stops
- Suggestions and feedback
  - Advisory committees
  - Pathway condition information
- Snow removal “audits”
- Advocacy for improved community policy and legislation

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### The Walkable Communities Task Force

- City of Jackson, Michigan (40 miles west of Ann Arbor)
- Citywide initiative started to encourage and facilitate active transportation (walking and biking)
- Partner with city leaders
- Projects have included:
  - Snow-shovel audits for neighborhood pathways
  - Thank you door hangers for cleared pathways

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### Denver Regional Mobility and Access Council

- The DRMAC created the Transit and Accessibility Task Force
- One objective was to remove barriers (including snow as well as cracked or damaged walkways) to paths of travel to bus stops
- Created a resource: Sidewalk Snow Removal and Repair Requirements for Municipalities in the Regional Transportation District
  - Reference document for residents including the repair and snow removal requirements, enforcement and reporting violations

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### Results of Snow Removal Survey

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### General Results

- 58 respondents
- 52% were transit providers
- 21% human service providers
- 14% represented city or county government
- 9% were individuals
- 3% were universities
- 1% were unknown

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### General Results (cont.)

- 59% have snow removal policies
- 41% do not have snow removal policies
- 40% removed snow on their own
- 31% partnered with other agencies
- 29% unknown

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### Complete Policies

- All sidewalks, intersections and accessible parking are cleared 24 hours after the storm
- Use a combination of city personnel and volunteers to clear sidewalks and intersections
- Contractors begin plowing after 2 inches of snowfall and they clear bus stops and paths to them

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### Less Complete Policies

- We remove snow from bus stops but adjacent residents and businesses are responsible for clearing sidewalks
- We clear the 20% of our bus stops that belong to transit and pathways to them and the rest are the responsibility of other property owners

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### Communications

- A combination of social and traditional media
- Phone calls to individuals for scheduled trips
- Cancelling trips when it is clear return trips may be problematic
- Making sure that no one on the schedule is left

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### Additional Comments

- This is really hard.
- More needs to be done.
- Better cooperation is needed
- Our agency can't do it all alone

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### Potential Roles for Advocates in Changing Local Policies and Practices

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## Build Partnerships

- Pedestrians
- Pedestrians who need the accessible features
- City/County government
- Transit agencies
- Human service agencies
- Schools and universities
- Health facilities

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## Use a Structured Approach

- What's in place now
- How to build on that
- What is being done elsewhere
- Develop a plan
- Review and update it every year

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## Questions?

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### Thank You

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## Contact Us



- ADA questions
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    - 1-800-949-4232 V/TTY
    - [www.adata.org](http://www.adata.org)
- Questions about this presentation
  - Mid-Atlantic ADA Center
    - 1-800-949-4232 V/TTY (DC, DE, MD, PA, VA, WV)
    - 301-217-0124 local
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## Mid-Atlantic ADA Center Networks



### ADA Leadership Network

- Experienced trainers who train on ADA Topics



### Community Partners Network

- Advocates and others who are active in their communities in sharing information about the ADA



### Title II Network

- ADA Coordinators and other professionals in state and local government agencies who work to ensure implementation of the ADA

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