

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



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• In the webinar platform:

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• E-mail: ADAtraining@transcen.org

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Archive

- This webinar is being recorded and can be accessed within a few business days
- You will receive an email with information on accessing the archive

Certificate of Participation

- Please consult the reminder email you received about this session for instructions on obtaining a certificate of participation for this webinar.
- You will need to listen for the continuing education code which will be announced at the conclusion of this session.
- Requests for continuing education credits must be received by 12:00 PM EDT **March 6, 2015**



Developing Effective Practices for Snow Removal

Why is it Worth all the Effort?

March 5, 2015

Working together to build accessible communities for all!



Meet Your Presenters

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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

If Pedestrians Had Clout



©Dan Wasserman, The Boston Globe

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 15

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

Snow Banks

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

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.

The Inequality Factor (cont.)

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

The ADA and Snow Removal

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

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

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)

Innovative Practices

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

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

Additional Comments

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

Potential Roles for Advocates in Changing Local Policies and Practices

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



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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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Thank you for joining us!

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