

Executive Summary

Snowbound Vehicle Standard

Proposed Amendment to Chapter 71

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Background and Problem

This proposed amendment to Chapter 71 addresses vehicles that remain on public streets after snow events and prevent the completion of snow removal and ice control operations.

Under current practice, when a Snow Emergency ends, typically at **6:00 a.m.**, vehicles that were not moved during the emergency can immediately become legally parked again, even if they were plowed around. These vehicles often remain encased in snow, creating "islands of ice" that narrow travel lanes, reduce emergency vehicle access, block drainage, and contribute to persistent ice conditions long after the storm has passed.

Proposed Approach

The amendment establishes a **completion-based standard** for snow removal, defining a **snowbound** vehicle based on physical condition rather than a clock:

- **Completion Standard:** A street segment is not considered cleared until snow removal reaches the curb line.
- **Snowbound Definition:** A vehicle that has been plowed around and prevents curb-line removal is snowbound.
- **Condition-Based Enforcement:** Enforcement depends on physical obstruction of the public way, not the status of an active snow emergency.
- **Legal Basis:** The City possesses authority under **RSA 262:32** (Removal of Abandoned or Stranded Vehicles) and existing nuisance abatement and obstruction provisions.

Legal Comparison: How Other Cities Address the Gap

City	Official Citation / Authority	Legal Trigger	Standard Used	Enforcement Outcome
Wayzata, MN	Code § 303.01(A)	Street not fully plowed to curb line	Completion-based standard	Parking ban remains in effect for that spot until cleared.
Aberdeen, SD	Code § 50-89	Street not fully plowed to curb line	Fully Plowed Standard	Residents may only resume parking once the curb is visible.
Ogden, UT	Code § 10-5-21	Snowbound condition after plows carve around vehicle	Presumed abandoned	Vehicle considered abandoned after 48h; ticketing/towing authorized.
Medford, MA	Police / Traffic Policy	Physical snow encasement used as evidence	48-hour Evidence	Snow buildup proves no movement; towed during "widening" operations.
Manchester (Proposed)	Chapter 71 + RSA 262:32	Vehicle prevents curb-line snow removal	Condition-based snowbound definition	Ticketing and towing under existing nuisance/obstruction authority.

Conclusion

The proposed snowbound vehicle standard provides a fair and visible approach that encourages compliance and allows the City to complete snow removal and ice control operations and restore safe street conditions for all residents.

Proposed Amendment to Chapter 71 – Snowbound Vehicles

§ 71.XX — Snowbound Vehicles

(A) Definition.

A *snowbound vehicle* is any motor vehicle that:

1. Is located on a public street or public way; and
2. Has been plowed around or encased by snow removal operations such that snow removal to the curb line cannot be completed or the normal use of the public way is obstructed.

(B) Completion Standard.

For purposes of snow removal and ice control operations, a street or any segment thereof shall not be considered cleared until snow has been removed to the curb line. The expiration of a declared snow emergency shall not authorize a snowbound vehicle to remain an obstruction to the completion of curb-line snow removal.

(C) Prohibited Conduct.

No person shall allow a snowbound vehicle, as defined in subsection (A), to remain on a public street or public way once snow removal operations have occurred and the vehicle continues to prevent completion of snow removal or obstruct the public way.

(D) Enforcement Authority.

A snowbound vehicle shall be deemed to:

1. Interfere with snow removal operations;
2. Constitute an obstruction of the public way; and
3. Constitute a public nuisance;

and may be enforced under the City's existing abandoned vehicle, obstruction, or nuisance authority, including authority granted under **RSA 262:32**.

(E) Penalties and Remedies.

1. A snowbound vehicle may be **ticketed** using the same citation authority and penalty structure currently applied to snow emergency parking violations.
2. A snowbound vehicle may be **towed and impounded** using the same procedures, fees, and owner responsibilities currently applicable to vehicles towed during declared snow emergencies.
3. Enforcement under this section shall not require a declared snow emergency to be in effect.

(F) Compliance Opportunity.

A vehicle shall no longer be considered snowbound once it is moved and access for snow removal to the curb line is restored.