

**1. Policy**

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<b>Policy Number:</b>	<i>TBD</i>
<b>Policy Name:</b>	<b>Significant Weather Event Policy</b>
<b>Effective Date:</b>	May 1, 2026
<b>Last Revised:</b>	February 28, 2026
<b>Last Reviewed:</b>	February 28, 2026

**2. Policy Purpose**

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The purpose of this policy is to establish a clear, consistent, and legally compliant framework for the declaration, management, communication, and termination of Significant Weather Events (SWE) for the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake (Town). This policy is intended to protect public safety, support effective operations, and ensure compliance with Ontario Regulation 239/02 – Minimum Maintenance Standards for Municipal Highways (O. Reg. 239/02).

**3. Scope**

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This policy applies to:

- The Public Works and Infrastructure Services Division, including all staff involved in winter control, road maintenance, sidewalk maintenance, storm response, and related operations;
- All municipal highways, roadways, sidewalks, multi-use paths, and related infrastructure under the jurisdiction of the Town; and
- Town staff involved in operational response, communications, and emergency coordination during severe or unusual weather events.

This policy does not apply to:

- Private roads/lanes, or roadways not assumed for maintenance by the Town; and
- Regional roads or Provincial highways within Niagara-on-the-Lake (operated and maintained by Niagara Region or the Ministry of Transportation Ontario).

#### 4. Definitions

TERM	DEFINITION
Significant Weather Event	<p>An approaching or occurring weather hazard with the potential to pose a significant danger to users of municipal highways, such that it may be impractical or unsafe to meet the minimum maintenance standards set out in O. Reg. 239/02.</p> <p>Significant Weather Events may include, but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Snowstorms or blizzards</li> <li>• Freezing rain or ice storms</li> <li>• Snow squalls or flash freeze events</li> <li>• Extreme rainfall or flooding</li> <li>• High wind events</li> <li>• Extreme temperature events</li> </ul>

#### 5. Policy Statement

The Town is committed to maintaining safe municipal highways and pedestrian infrastructure in accordance with O. Reg. 239/02.

Where severe or unusual weather conditions occur, it may be impractical or unsafe to meet the minimum maintenance standards within prescribed timelines. In these circumstances, the Town may declare a SWE in accordance with this policy to ensure:

- Public safety remains the primary operational priority;
- Decisions and actions are coordinated and consistently applied; and
- Communications are timely and transparent.

#### 6. Policy Details

This policy is enacted under the authority of:

- Municipal Act, 2001
- Ontario Regulation 239/02, Minimum Maintenance Standards for Municipal Highways, as amended

O. Reg. 239/02 recognizes that during severe or unusual weather conditions, municipalities may be unable to meet prescribed maintenance standards and permits the declaration of a SWE.

## 7. Procedures

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### 7.1 Conditions for Declaration

A SWE may be declared when one or more of the following conditions exist:

- A severe or unusual weather event is approaching or occurring within the Town;
- The weather conditions pose, or are expected to pose, a significant risk to the safety of road and sidewalk users; and/or
- A Public Weather Alert has been issued by Environment and Climate Change Canada under the Public Weather Alerting Program (e.g., Winter Storm Warning, Blizzard Warning, Freezing Rain Warning, Snowfall Warning).

The declaration may apply to the entire municipality or to specific geographic areas, depending on the scope and impact of the weather event.

### 7.2 Declaration of Significant Weather Event

The declaration of a SWE should be made by the Director of Public Works and Infrastructure, or their designate, in consultation with the Chief Administrative Office (CAO), Manager of Public Works, and the Road Supervisor, with knowledge of weather, road conditions, and resource availability.

The Director, or their designate, shall:

- Determine when a SWE begins and ends;
- Direct operational responses during the event;
- Ensure appropriate documentation and record-keeping; and
- Communicate the declaration and termination of the event in accordance with this policy.

### 7.3 Operational Implications During a Significant Weather Event

When a SWE is declared:

- Municipal roads, sidewalks, and related infrastructure are deemed to be in a state of repair for the duration of the event;
- The timelines and performance standards prescribed under O. Reg. 239/02 are temporarily suspended;

- The Town shall make reasonable efforts, as conditions permit, to deploy resources and monitor conditions; and
- Public safety remains the primary operational objective.

This policy does not relieve the Town of its obligation to act responsibly, prudently, and in good faith during severe weather events.

### **7.4 Communication and Public Notification**

The declaration and termination of a SWE shall be communicated to the public through one or more of the following channels:

- Town website;
- Official social media platforms;
- Media release, where appropriate.

Internal notification shall also be provided to relevant Town departments and emergency partners as required.

### **7.5 Documentation and Record-Keeping**

During a SWE, the Public Works and Infrastructure Services Department shall maintain detailed records, including:

- Date and time of declaration and termination;
- Weather forecasts, alerts, and observations;
- Operational decisions and actions taken; and
- Resource deployment and limitations.

These records are essential for operational review, regulatory compliance, and risk management purposes.

### **7.6 Rescinding a Significant Weather Event**

A SWE shall be rescinded when weather conditions have stabilized to the extent that normal maintenance operations and minimum maintenance standards can reasonably resume.

The termination of the event shall be communicated using the same methods as the declaration.

## **8. Forms**

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Not Applicable

## 9. Responsibilities

POSITION or OFFICE	RESPONSIBILITIES
Chief Administrative Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consult with the Director of Public Works &amp; Infrastructure Services to determine the appropriateness of declaring a Significant Weather Event.</li> </ul>
Director of Public Works and Infrastructure Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Declare and SWE.</li> <li>Ensure SWE declarations align with this policy and O. Reg. 239/02.</li> <li>Direct operational priorities and allocate resources.</li> <li>Ensure documentation and records are maintained.</li> </ul>
Manager of Public Works	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coordinate operational response activities.</li> <li>Ensure staff scheduling and equipment deployment align with event conditions.</li> </ul>
Road Supervisor/Operations Supervisor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitor conditions and provide operational recommendations.</li> <li>Implement operational response actions (plowing, salting, patrols, etc.).</li> <li>Maintain operational logs, deployment details, and resource limitations.</li> </ul>
Public Works Staff/Contractors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Carry out assigned operational tasks safely and in accordance with procedures.</li> <li>Record operational activities and any hazards/limitations encountered.</li> </ul>
Communications Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Issue public notices for SWE declaration and termination.</li> <li>Maintain consistent public messaging (website, social media, media release as needed).</li> </ul>

## 10. Related Information

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- Municipal Act, 2001
- Ontario Regulation 239/02, Minimum Maintenance Standards for Municipal Highways, as amended

## 11. Contacts

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Please direct any questions regarding this policy to:

OFFICE	PHONE	EMAIL
Public Works and Infrastructure Services	905-468-3266	operations@notl.com

POLICY GOVERNANCE	
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<b>Responsible Office:</b>	Public Works and Infrastructure Services Division
<b>Supplemental Documents:</b>	Not Applicable