

BROOKFIELD PUBLIC SAFETY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

SAFETY TIPS FOR MARCH, 2024

These tips are intended for residents and property owners of Brookfield, VT but may apply to neighboring towns as well.

- **PLOWING OR BLOWING SNOW ONTO OR OVER A HIGHWAY**

It is an apparently common practice for property owners and snow removal contractors to push or blow snow from a driveway over a state or town highway to the other side of the road and or leave snow on the surface of the road. This usually leaves one or more bumps in the road that can turn into icy patches that could cause an accident.

Additionally, these bumps could cause difficulties for a plow truck and damage equipment or cause an accident. Still further, the snow plowed across the road and deposited could project or slide into the traveled portion of the road and restrict traffic and cause an accident. Vermont Statutes Title 23 prohibits it. (Cite as: 23 V.S.A. § 1126a). It is punishable by a \$76.00 fine and 0 points on a traffic ticket. Also, if your deposit of snow causes an accident, you could be sued civilly. Even if you hire a snow removal contractor, you as the property owner are responsible. In most instances there are practical alternatives to plowing or blowing snow onto the highway. It may involve creating places for the snow to be plowed or blown onto your property and not the highway. Be safe and avoid a fine or an accident.

- **OPENING THE ENTRANCE TO YOUR DRIVEWAY**

In a heavy snow-season it is particularly common to see a driveway entrance piled high with snow where a vehicle departing the driveway must pull into the traveled portion of the highway before being able to see if it is safe to enter traffic. This is not safe and sooner or later will result in either a near miss or contact with another vehicle. There is no law prohibiting piling snow high at the entrance of your driveway, but you could suffer damage to your vehicle or injury to you and your passengers plus being found the cause of the accident which will likely cause your auto insurance rates to increase.

Usually there is a cost- effective way to lower the top of the snowbank on each side of your driveway entrance. In most cases that cost will seem small compared to having an accident, possibly with injuries resulting.

- **CLEANING THE SNOW OFF FROM YOUR VEHICLE**

When it has snowed or rained and frozen onto your vehicle, you are expected to fully clean the windshield and side windows before operating the vehicle. Additionally, you are expected to clean the snow off from your vehicle so as not to have that snow or ice come off from your vehicle onto other traffic. This is also true of the beds of pickup

trucks. There are two prohibitions in the Vermont State Statues that apply to both State and local roads. 1125. Obstructing windshields, windows (Cite as: 23 V.S.A. § 1125) \$76.00 fine and 0 points. § 1492. Liability for damage defined; limitations. (Cite as: 23 V.S.A. § 1492) \$134.00 fine and 0 points. Be safe and avoid an accident or a fine.

Brookfield Public Safety Advisory Committee: Stuart Edson, Michael Rutkovsky, Dan Mason, Mike Stoddard and Lew Stowell