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Subject: Significant Weather Event Policy

Policy #:

Date Approved: September 3, 2025

Date Revised:

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish a protocol for the declaration of a Significant Weather Event under Ontario Regulation 239/02, Minimum Maintenance Standards for Municipal Highways (MMS).

2. Background

Ontario Regulation 239/02: Minimum Maintenance Standards for Municipal Highways

This regulation sets out the minimum maintenance standards that municipalities must follow for roads, sidewalks, and bicycle lanes to manage liability and ensure public safety. The Town of Aylmer maintains its roads infrastructure according to the Minimum Maintenance Standards (MMS).

According to this regulation, if a municipality declares a Significant Weather Event, the standard for addressing various weather events until the end of the Significant Weather Event is to:

- a) monitor the weather;
- b) deploy resources to address the weather event when deemed appropriate and practicable by the Town to do so.

3. Definitions

Clerk

The Clerk for the Corporation of the Town of Aylmer or their designate.

Director of Operations

The Director of Operations for the Corporation of the Town of Aylmer or their designate.

Significant Weather Event

An approaching or occurring weather hazard with the potential to pose a significant danger to users of the highways within a municipality.

Town

The Corporation of the Town of Aylmer.

Weather Hazard

A type of condition (weather or environmental) that has a negative impact on the safety and security of the public.

4. Policy Statement

The Town of Aylmer is committed to maintaining the safety and accessibility of its roadways, sidewalks, and municipal infrastructure in accordance with the Minimum Maintenance Standards for Municipal Highways. A Significant Weather Event may be declared when hazardous weather conditions – such as heavy snowfall, freezing rain, high winds, or extreme temperatures – affect the Town’s ability to meet its maintenance requirements within the standard timelines.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

The Director of Operations and/or their designate:

- May declare a Significant Weather Event, pursuant to Regulation 239/02, Minimum Maintenance Standards for Municipal Highways (MMS) for any or all weather hazards listed in the Procedures section of this policy on roadways maintained by the Town of Aylmer;
- May declare the end of the Significant Weather Event when it is determined appropriate to do so.

The Clerk and/or their designate:

- Shall announce the declaration as well as the end of a Significant Weather Event in the following ways:
 - i. By posting a notice on the Town’s website.
 - ii. By making an announcement on the Town’s social media platform(s).
 - iii. By notification through the Aylmer Police Service.

6. Procedure

The following procedure is to be followed:

- i. The Director of Operations and/or their designate may declare a Significant Weather Event, pursuant to Regulation 239/02, Minimum Maintenance Standards for Municipal Highways (MMS), for any or all of the following weather hazards on roadways maintained by the Town of Aylmer:

Weather Alert	Definition
Blizzard Warning	When winds of 40 km/hr or greater are expected to cause widespread reductions in visibility to 400 metres or less, due to blowing snow, or blowing snow in combination with falling snow, for at least 4 hours .
Blowing Snow Advisory	When blowing snow, caused by winds of at least 30 km/h, is expected to reduce visibility to 800 metres or less for at least 3 hours.
Extreme Cold Warning	When the temperature or wind chill is expected to reach minus 30°C for at least 2 hours.
Flash Freeze Warning	When significant ice is expected to form on roads, sidewalks, or other surfaces over much of a region because of the freezing of residual water from either melted snow, or falling/fallen rain due to a rapid drop in temperatures.
Fog Advisory	When low visibilities in fog are expected for at least 6 hours .
Freezing Drizzle Advisory	When a period of freezing drizzle is expected for at least 8 hours .
Freezing Rain Warning	When freezing rain is expected to pose a hazard to transportation or property; Or When freezing rain is expected for at least 2 hours .
Frost Advisory	When surface temperatures are expected to fall near freezing in the overnight period. Issued during growing season when widespread frost formation is expected over an extensive area.
Heat Warning	When 2 or more consecutive days of daytime maximum temperatures are expected to reach 31°C or warmer and nighttime minimum temperatures are expected to fall to 20°C or warmer; Or When 2 or more consecutive days of humidex values are expected to reach 40 or higher.
Rainfall Warning	<u>Short Duration (Heavy Downpour) Warning</u> When 50 mm or more of rain is expected within 1 hour.

Weather Alert	Definition
	<p><u>Long Duration Rainfall Warning in the Summer</u> When 50 mm or more of rain is expected within 24 hours; Or When 75 mm or more of rain is expected within 48 hours.</p> <p><u>Long Duration Rainfall Warning in Winter</u> When 25 mm or more of rain is expected within 24 hours.</p>
Severe Thunderstorm Watch and/or Warning	<p><u>Severe Thunderstorm Watch</u> When conditions are favorable for the development of severe thunderstorms with one or more of the following conditions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wind gusts of 90 km/hr or greater, which could cause structural wind damage; • Hail of 2 cm or larger in diameter; or • Heavy rainfall, as per the above weather alert. <p><u>Severe Thunderstorm Warning</u> When there is evidence based on radar, satellite pictures, or from a reliable spotter that any one or more of the following three weather conditions is imminent or occurring:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wind gusts of 90 km/hr or greater, which could cause structural wind damage; • Hail of 2 cm or larger in diameter; or • Heavy rainfall, as per the above weather alert.
Snowfall Warning	When 15 cm or more of snow falls within 12 hours or less.
Snow Squall Watch and/or Warning	<p><u>Snow Squall Watch</u> When conditions are favorable for the development of brief periods of very poor visibilities caused by heavy snow and blowing snow.</p> <p><u>Snow Squall Warning</u> When there is a brief period (less than 1 hour) of very poor visibility (400 m or less) caused by heavy snow and blowing snow, and accompanied by strong, gusty winds of 45 km/hr or greater, is expected to occur with the passage of a cold front.</p>

Weather Alert	Definition
Tornado Watch and/or Warning	<p>When conditions are favorable for the development of severe thunderstorms with one or more tornadoes;</p> <p>Or</p> <p>When a tornado has been reported; or when there is evidence based on radar, or from a reliable spotter that a tornado is imminent.</p>
Weather Advisory and/or Warning	<p><u>Weather Advisory</u> A generic weather advisory.</p> <p><u>Weather Warning</u> A generic weather warning may be issued for extreme weather events for which there is no suitable warning type, because they rarely occur.</p> <p>A generic weather warning may also be issued for other weather events during situations where the environment is vulnerable to pre-existing conditions and any further weather could result in a significant hazard.</p> <p>A generic weather warning may also be issued for situations where the event is not expected to reach warning criteria values, but there is a special reason for the warning.</p>
Wind Warning	70 km/hr or more sustained wind; and/or Gusts to 90 km/hr or more.
Winter Storm Watch and/or Warning	<p><u>Winter Storm Watch</u></p> <p>When conditions are favorable for the development of severe and potentially dangerous winter weather, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A blizzard; • A major snowfall (25 cm or more within a 24-hour period); and, • A significant snowfall combined with other winter weather hazard types such as: freezing rain, strong winds, blowing snow and/or extreme wind chill.

And/or

- Any other factor deemed relevant by the Director of Operation and/or their designate.

7. Documentation / References

[Criteria for Public Weather Alerts, Government of Canada](#)

[Ontario Regulation 239/02, Minimum Maintenance Standards for Municipal Highways \(MMS\)](#)

8. Appendix

A - Sample Declaration of a Significant Weather Event Notice



Town of Aylmer Declares a Significant Weather Event

At [TIME] [DATE], the Town of Aylmer officially declared a Significant Weather Event as per Ontario Regulation 239/02. This declaration applies to all roads within the geographic boundary of the Town of Aylmer.

The Town is currently responding to the significant snowfall. Declaring a Significant Weather Event allows the Town to continue road maintenance operations in a safe and responsible manner during severe and hazardous weather. Town plows will continue to operate, but the difficult weather conditions can mean road and sidewalk maintenance may take longer than usual.

All non-essential travel throughout the Town is strongly discouraged. If citizens must travel, leave plenty of additional time and give snowplows extra space and distance to operate.

Read the full notice: www.aylmer.ca/news

B - Sample End of a Significant Weather Event Notice



Town of Aylmer Declares End to Significant Weather Event

[TIME] [DATE]

The Significant Weather Event Declaration for the Town of Aylmer has now ended. The Town of Aylmer Works Department continues to monitor road and weather conditions to ensure public safety is maintained. Thank you to all residents for their patience during this time.