

## Winter Snow Care Protects Our Waterways

Ensure Spring Runoff Does Not Pollute Local Creeks and Rivers

**STEAMBOAT SPRINGS, COLORADO-December 11, 2025**-With snow already arriving across the Yampa Valley and surely much more to come this winter, it's important to remember that residential and commercial snow removal and storage could have long lasting effects if not done properly.

"Snow doesn't stop being stormwater just because it's frozen—it collects pollutants that can wash directly into our streams and river when it melts," said Water Resources Manager Julie Baxter. "All winter long, we're asking everyone to be thoughtful about where they pile their snow."

Many contractors and residents use powerful machines to assist moving and storing the more than 20 feet of powder on average the city receives in a season. This equipment has the potential to release oil, fuel, or other liquids, which as the snow melts can make its way to local waterways.

In addition, de-icing chemicals and salts should be used judiciously. Property owners should apply only what is required to make walkways and driveways safe and never near waterways.

The city requires the following practices to be implemented when plowing and storing snow.

- Do not plow snow directly into a waterway. If plowed snow is allowed to enter a waterway directly or incidentally, it is considered a violation of city's municipal code.
- Snow is allowed to be stored above a stream bank if it is not overspilling into a creek or river.
- Avoid piling snow on storm drains. Make sure your nearest storm drains are clear to avoid flooding.
- As snow storage piles melt, trash must be picked up and disposed of properly.
- Plowing equipment must be maintained to prevent fluid leaks. If leaks are detected, they must be addressed and cleaned up immediately. Drip pans may be necessary for persistent leaks.
- If equipment is being fueled on site, care must be given to prevent spills. If spills occur, they must be cleaned up immediately.



"Paying attention during the winter is key, since pollutants can impact both your property and our local waterways," said Stormwater Specialist and Engineering Inspector Scott Slamal. "It's a long, snowy season, and we're grateful for everyone's help in keeping our watershed healthy."

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