



Clean & Green



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It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas! The holiday season is here and the temperatures are starting to feel like it as well. This means it's time for our Grounds department to be working on winterizing campus for the winter. We have winterized our irrigation systems to keep them from freezing and busting during cold temperatures. We do this by shutting off the water meter and then using an air compressor to push air through the irrigation lines which forces the water out of the system and leaves the system dry. We are also in the process of trimming, cleaning, and mulching beds, as well as, cleaning out gutters and stairwells. We are also getting ready for what is a real 4-letter word in our department, "SNOW"!

Snow removal is always a difficult task to accomplish. We had been fortunate for several winters and had only received a few minimal snow events. However, last February and March produced several different weather systems that brought us snow and ice. This forced the university to close on several different occasions. Our Grounds crew was still here, working hard during that time to clear campus as much as possible. We even had a crew here at 2 am so they could start working as soon as the weather event began to try to get Murphy Center ready for the TSSAA girl's state basketball tournament. (The games were postponed that day, but we had Murphy Center ready by 10 am and our MTSU women's team played a home game that evening.)

Ice is a much tougher element for us to manage. Many north facing sides of buildings do not receive much sun during the winter and makes removing ice extremely difficult. Last winter, we had some of these areas where the ice remained even after the temperatures were up near 50 degrees F. This was even after using an entire winters supply of ice melt almost exclusively on these areas. We also had to deal with a large number of downed trees and limbs from the ice accumulation.

Snow Removal Plan:

We have three snow plows for sidewalks and one plow that uses a broom attachment to remove snow from areas with brick pavers. We use shovels and brooms to clear ADA ramps and we put down ice melt on the ramps and near entrances to buildings. We use a backhoe to put down sand at intersections to help with traction. We don't have any equipment to brine the streets or parking lots and we don't have any type of street plow to clear parking lots.

Depending on timing and conditions, we will start the snow removal process as soon as possible after the snow starts to stick to the hardscape or as soon as possible when the snowfall starts to taper off. One crew begins putting out sand at intersections, a second crew starts working ADA ramps and building entrances, and another crew starts plowing sidewalks. We plow from dorms to cafeterias first so that students who live on campus will be able to get food. The next area of focus is the major sidewalks servicing into campus such as the large sidewalk that runs from Greek Row to JUB, as well as, sidewalks leading into campus from parking lots. As we go, we try to clear at least one entry into buildings (usually the main entrance). We then work on secondary sidewalks and secondary entrances. If there are any events scheduled on campus, we will make every effort to have that area clear before the event begins. If snow is falling while we are working, we will start the entire process over again, but we may not make it to many secondary areas until the snowfall has ceased.

Keep in mind that you may not be able to take your normal route to a building, but there will almost always be a clear path to get you there.

We strive to keep campus cleared of snow and ice during winter weather, but it is a tough task. Our crew usually has to come in before the main roads have been treated and work long hours in difficult conditions. The cold temperatures are usually hard on our equipment and it's no small feat just to keep our plows running. With snow and ice, we may not be able to do much about being "Green", but will do our best to keep it "Clean".





