

# POSTSEASON REVIEW

Too often, snow and ice management pros, particularly landscape contractors, rush into spring and summer work without a chance to properly review the past snow season. A post-winter review identifies opportunities to improve in three key areas: your team, your clients and your assets. The review process helps companies identify needed changes that can improve the bottom line and make your company more competitive.



## POSTSEASON REVIEW CHECKLISTS

Gather information, review it and set a plan of action

### TEAM. Review the safety, productivity and morale of individuals and crews as a whole for each site

- Verify staffing levels are accurate to enable safety and productivity.
- Review individual hours worked (anything above a 10- to 12-hour shift should be reviewed).
- Assess morale of individuals and the team.
- Review safety incidents. Identify root causes to develop improvement processes and training.

### CLIENTS. Assess the satisfaction of your customers

- Identify communication processes to improve or establish (e.g., email, phone, in-person review).
- Address how to document and follow up on concerns and future complaints.
- Review Level of Service (LOS) expectations with clients to address root cause issues for complaints and for the contract renewal process.

### ASSETS. Review the productivity and efficiency for equipment and materials used at each site

- Document equipment and parts breakdowns. How often and why? Are breakdowns from poor operational technique or overutilized equipment for a particular site or route?
- Identify if equipment is being used correctly and is properly maintained.
- Develop training curriculum to address any issues related to improper use.

### MATERIAL USE. Review the use of deicing chemicals for each site

- Confirm if your material achieved the contracted levels of service.
- Verify material usage matched budgeted/estimated usage. Are there opportunities to save on material use and application labor?
- Did you experience salt supply shortages this season, and if so, why?
- Document customer complaints regarding overuse of deicers. Identify customers, routes and drivers to identify if there is a pattern.
- Develop training curriculum to include equipment calibration and awareness of expectations to follow sustainable salt use guidelines.

### SITE DAMAGE. Complete a site review and identify any damage not present in your preseason visit. Review all damages documented during the season.

- Categorize all property damage and categorize incidents by cause (see reverse). Were incidents specific to one site or one operator?
- Incorporate technique or employee-related changes into training to prevent the same mistakes next season.
- Talk with impacted clients so that they know you are responsive to their needs and respectful of their property.
- Create an in-season plan for training on how to communicate and manage property damage.

# SITE DAMAGE REVIEW

Damage caused by equipment operators can be costly, not only in repair expenses but also to a client's trust. Damages can reveal many things, such as misuse of equipment, incorrect work procedures, training needs, or that the wrong equipment is being used on the site. Companies should have a damage reporting process in place and an effective training program that teaches operators how to prevent damage whenever possible. Following are common reasons damage may occur during the winter and tips to help manage those circumstances.



## HUMAN ERROR

Pay close attention to your surroundings and avoid distractions when plowing. Learn proper techniques to avoid backing up in plow trucks, particularly those outfitted with spreaders, which may inhibit sight lines. Spending long hours in equipment is dangerous. If you do not feel that you can safely operate the equipment, immediately alert your supervisor.



## VISIBILITY

Properties that have not been staked and/or hazards and obstacles not documented during a preseason walkthrough are damage reports waiting to happen. Curbs and other obstacles may not be visible during inclement conditions, raising the potential that plow crews can cause damage during operations.



## OPERATIONAL TECHNIQUES

Prior to operations, review site maps and instructions and assess the property for new situations that may result in damage. Follow best practices for plowing techniques and avoid operations that can result in damage, such as pushing snow against fence lines.



## CHEMICALS

Using deicers can cause grass burn and other turf/shrub damage. During operations take care to carefully apply deicers so they are not broadcast into the grass. Consider whether there alternative treatment methods that won't impact landscaping.