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Boston issues 6,900 parking tickets, tows 650 cars, hands out at least \$25,650 in snow removal fines

Posted by Matt Rocheleau February 12, 2013 04:15 PM

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By Matt Rocheleau, Town Correspondent

About 6,900 parking tickets have been issued and more than 650 vehicles towed in Boston since the past weekend's snowstorm hit. And, city officials have issued more than 500 to property owners who failed to adequately clear sidewalks or who put snow on city streets and sidewalks.

The parking tickets, which range from \$15 to \$120 depending on the infraction, represent at least \$103,380 in fines handed out between Friday and Tuesday. The tows, which are done by private companies and generally cost an additional \$100 to \$150, represent at least \$66,300 charged to Boston drivers during that span.

The snow removal-related citations, which cost between \$50 and \$300 each depending on the violation, represent at least \$25,650 in fines handed out between Saturday and Tuesday morning.

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“If you get a ticket, it’s a wake-up call that you dropped the ball on your responsibility,” said Bryan Glascock, commissioner of the city’s Inspectional Services Department, which oversees Boston’s snow removal rules. “It’s been long enough now since the storm ended. There’s no excuse for it this late in the game.”

“If everybody just took responsibility for their own little corner of the world, we’d have this thing licked,” he added. “The main message we’re trying to get out to folks is to clear your sidewalks and don’t push the snow back out into the streets, that doesn’t help it just makes things worse.”

In Boston, putting snow, slush or ice onto city streets or sidewalks – whether by shoveling, plowing, throwing, or any other means – is [banned by law](#) and can lead to fines.

Property and business owners are also required to clear paths that are at least 42 inches wide along any adjacent sidewalk or handicap ramp within three hours after a snowstorm ends. If a storm ends overnight, paths must be cleared within three hours from sunrise.

“You’re walking along great and all of a sudden you come to one building – 50 feet or so – and it’s not cleared and you have to try to get around it and go into the street,” said Glascock.

“The thing we all dread is if someone is forced to walk into the street and gets clipped by a car or a senior citizen slips and falls on the ice,” he continued. “That’s the stuff we really hate to hear about.”

The city’s Code Enforcement Police Chief Michael Mackan said that he and his staff of about 16 officers use discretion when writing citations and that they are not trying to hit any sort of fine quota.

“It’s about changing people’s habits,” he said. “You don’t write as many tickets as you might think. A lot of times we catch people in the act and given them a chance to correct their actions. A little verbal warning from an officer in uniform goes a long way.”

The department will continue to work on snow-related issues and issue fines as warranted until it addresses all of the 600-plus complaints received for uncleared sidewalks and for people putting snow onto streets and sidewalks.

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Mackan said. About 350 of the complaints – about 300 of which were for inadequately cleared sidewalks – had been resolved as of Tuesday morning.

“People are not shy about calling in and that’s a good thing because it helps us find out where to go,” said Glascock.

“But it takes time,” he added. “We’re doing fairly well.

He expressed thanks to some residents and property owners who have resolved complaints by shoveling and snow blowing problems areas themselves.

In addition to asking Bostonians to follow city laws for safety’s sake and to avoid fines, the department is also asking residents and property owners to clear nearby fire hydrants as well as catch basins and storm drains, which when clogged can cause large puddles to form.

Mackan said that, generally, the city is getting better and better with each storm at following snow removal-related rules. He said he is also seeing residents band together more and more to help shovel out other neighbors, particularly seniors and people with disabilities.

“A storm this large and the timing of it really brings the neighborhood together,” he said. “It’s a good community builder, a storm like this.”

The storm's heavy snowfall has also created parking problems.

Boston Police issued 3,349 parking tickets and had 568 vehicles towed between Friday and 4:30 p.m. Tuesday, spokeswoman Cheryl Fiandaca said.

In addition, the Boston Transportation Department issued 3,543 parking tickets and had 95 vehicles towed between Friday and 6 a.m. Tuesday morning, spokeswoman Tracey Ganiatsos said.

For more information, visit

<http://www.cityofboston.gov/snow/removal/snowremoval.asp>.

Below is a list, sorted by city ward, of fines issued for uncleared sidewalks and improper snow removal. Some wards include multiple neighborhoods and some neighborhoods split by multiple wards. To see a map of the city’s wards, [click here](#):

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- Ward 15 – Dorchester (Meeting House Hill) – 23
- Ward 16 – Dorchester (Neponset, Cedar Grove) – 15
- Ward 17 – Dorchester (Lower Mills) – 20
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