

Department of Public Works



The department operates multiple divisions and a number of non-divisional functions under the Department of Public Works umbrella.

Most people do not understand the operations of this department and the responsibilities placed on it during the course of any given day. Many years ago we eliminated the divisional barriers to create a more diverse and responsive department to the daily request for service as well as the projected capital improvements and the required inspection, maintenance and testing imposed upon this department to provide safe, clean and effectively operated infrastructure.

One main component of our operation is readiness and preparedness, this department must be ready at any given time to deal with the wide array of emergency situations, ranging from water main breaks, sewer main breaks, traffic accidents, severe snow storms, high winds, heavy rains, tropical storms, hurricanes and road system failures, just to name a few. When most residents, businesses and general contractors experience emergencies they look for the Public Works Department to respond and resolve the issues at hand. Therefore, we must be continually readied and well stocked with an extremely wide array of material, equipment and well trained staff to serve the public.

Divisions:

Administration, Central Motors, Highway, Snow & Ice, Cemetery, Property & Buildings, Forestry, Parks, Water, Sewer

Non Divisional Functions:

Solid Waste, Street Lighting, Weights & Measures (partial), Recycle Center

The Department of Public Works operates with 53 staff members.

Administration

The Administration Division is responsible for the overall management of all divisions and non-divisional functions as listed above and is responsible for accounting, record keeping, water & sewer billing and permitting. This Division also interacts on a day to day basis with residents requesting service either via telephone or in person. This division is also responsible for improving and enhancing the services provided through a continued effort to modernize and computerize many of the admin functions which include cemetery documents, snow and ice management record keeping, as well as management of field computers used in the day to day operation of many divisions. This division is responsible for all regulatory and compliance reporting's to numerous state and federal agencies.



Central Motors

The Central Motors Division is responsible for the maintenance, repair and inspection of all the Department of Public Works motorized equipment, including inspectional services vehicles/senior bus/skating arena vehicle. Within their responsibilities there are a number of specialized and very high maintenance vehicles operated by the department which are critical to the day to day operations of each and every division. I believe it is important to state that the Central Motors Division is not comparable to your average repair shop. The day to day operations of this division undertake repair and maintenance of various vehicles which fall into standard motor vehicle class categories including high pressure water jetting systems and high volume sewer vacuum equipment as well as notoriously known high maintenance street sweeping equipment. Also this division is responsible for repair and maintenance of snow & ice equipment which include the general motorized equipment as well as deicing spreaders.



Highway

The Highway Division is responsible for all aspects of road construction and maintenance ranging from full depth reconstruction, including granite curbing and concrete sidewalks, and is also responsible for applying traffic calming measures, traffic management and enhancing access for pedestrians which includes compliance with the American Disability Act. This division also operates a yearly sidewalk replacement program addressing trip hazards and general sidewalk replacement town wide. The highway division is responsible for all permanent patching of water and sewer excavations, as well as general pot hole maintenance and responsible for all center line painting and crosswalk painting to include parking lane striping. Additional responsibilities include loaming and seeding of planting strips, street sweeping and parking lot maintenance as well as special projects, i.e., construction of the new recycling center, recent construction of the Wells Avenue parking area.

Included in the Highway Division responsibilities are permit preview, issuance and inspection.



Snow & Ice

This Division is supported by all members of the Department of Public Works and is responsible for providing safe travel for the motoring public as well as pedestrians. The Division performs deicing; snow plowing, snow removal, sidewalk clearing and bus stop clearing. These tasks are extremely difficult and must be ready 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, prepared to deal with extremely dangerous conditions and varying weather conditions. This task is even more difficult in Watertown considering the extremely high volumes of traffic that transverse through our community. The staff is continually investigating ever changing techniques for addressing snow and ice while at the same time evaluating cost effectiveness of our operation as well as new products.



Cemetery

The Cemetery Division is responsible for the day to day operation of one active cemetery and two non-active cemeteries, which comprise of 30 acres of land. Responsibilities include sale of lots, preparation of graves, oversight of burials, and setting of foundations and veterans markers. The staff handles approximately 120 interments per year.



Property & Buildings

This Division is responsible for the installation of all regulatory and non-regulatory signage, including street name signs, parking and no parking signs. Also this division is responsible for the installation of parking meter poles / general building maintenance / general electrical work / assists the water and sewer division in specialized trench surring as well as select street light maintenance on Mt. Auburn Street and Arsenal Street. This division is also responsible for the repair and maintenance of the Town's fire alarm system which include master box fire alarm connections to various businesses town wide, as well as numerous street fire alarm pull boxes.



Forestry

The Forestry Division is responsible for the pruning, maintenance and tree removal of all street trees town wide.



The Forestry Division is responsible for maintenance of city trees. This includes pruning, removal of dead trees, and disposing of Christmas trees after the holidays. The division also is responsible for perennial and annual planting, and maintenance, at the Town hall, Watertown Square, Knowles Delta, Public Works yard and numerous containers throughout the town.

Parks

The Parks Division is responsible for the maintenance of approximately 88 acres of various turf, playground and hard surface play areas.



The Parks Division maintains 88 acres of athletic and recreational facilities. The division works with Recreation and the school Athletic Department to insure that all fields are properly marked and groomed. This includes sports, such as, football, baseball, softball, field hockey, lacrosse, track & field, tennis, basketball and soccer. Other seasonal uses include two water parks as well as picnic and cookout grille facilities. Playground equipment is also maintained with a Certified Playground Safety Inspection on staff.

Water

The Water Division is responsible for over 80 miles of various size underground water mains and also is responsible for water services to residential structures and commercial buildings. This division is also responsible for operating and maintaining a radio frequency meter reading system as well as each and every individual water meter in every residential structure. Also responsible for accurate retrieval of water meter readings from commercial buildings where the town does not own the water meter. The water division operates numerous regulatory programs in conjunction with the Department of Environmental Protection regulations to ensure quality of water and to protect the potable water system. A synopsis of these programs is as follows:



The Water Division is also responsible for the maintenance of approximately 995 fire hydrants and responsible for the annual flushing of the water system through fire hydrants.

- Backflow protection, inspection / device testing / commercial cross connection survey
- Weekly water sampling and inspection to include testing by the division and testing by the MWRA analytical lab at various locations town wide every single week.
- Monitoring for lead in the drinking water
- Annual Leak Detection Program to monitor for unaccounted water

These bullets are only highlights of the many duties of the Utilities Division.

Sewer

The Sewer & Drain Division is responsible for the operation and maintenance of approximately 78 miles of sewer line and approximately 8,000 residential sewer connections to the sewer system, as well as the maintenance and operation of approximately 80 miles of storm drain lines which vary in size from 6 inches in diameter to 72 inches in diameter also maintenance, rebuilding, cleaning of approximately 3,200 storm drains.

The division works closely with the DEP, EPA and the MWRA in various aspects of regulatory compliance and system monitoring. The division monitors as well as samples numerous storm drain discharge points on a regular basis as well as sampling and monitoring key junction manholes located within the interior of the storm drain system, as required by the EPA.

