MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT, GREAT LAKES, AND ENERGY

# Snow Removal Guidance

## Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) Program


There are times when relocating snow may be necessary to manage excess quantities and ensure safe driving conditions. There are several environmental concerns regarding relocating excess snow from road rights of way or parking lots. Contaminants present in snow cleared from streets and parking lots can include deicing agents such as salt and sand, automobile exhaust particles, heavy metals, trash, and sediment. Implementation of proper best management practices can prevent or reduce the discharge of pollutants to surface waters and groundwater during snowmelt.

Relocating snow in Michigan is regulated under various statutes including Part 89, Littering of the Natural Resources Environmental Protection Act, PA 451 of 1994 (NREPA); and Part 31, Water Resources Protection of the NREPA. In an area with a regulated Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4), storm water discharges to surface waters of the State via MS4s are subject to National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit requirements.

The following tips will help guide decisions on relocating snow:

**Do:**

- ✓ Store snow at least 50 feet from a private well.
- ✓ Store snow at least 75 feet from a non-community water supply well.
- ✓ Store snow at least 200 feet from a municipal or community water supply well.
- ✓ Select sites that drain to detention or retention (infiltration) basins and capture pollutants.
- ✓ Select sites that have adequate distance between the ground surface and water table to act as a filter. Fine-grained loamy soils with a significant organic content will filter and retain potential contaminants.
- ✓ Install a silt fence or equivalent barrier between the snow storage area and the shoreline if the area is near surface water. The area should be at least 50 feet from the shoreline.

**Avoid:**

- ➢ Wellhead protection areas.
- ➢ Relocating snow directly in surface waters.
- ➢ Areas with a direct discharge to a catch basin as there is limited opportunity for treatment.
- ➢ Wetlands and floodplains as these areas are especially sensitive to excess water.
- ➢ Areas with steep slopes or readily erodible soils.
- ➢ Areas with a human exposure risk (e.g. playgrounds and ballparks).
- ➢ Landfill and compost areas. The added moisture can flush contaminants into the groundwater.
- ➢ Access areas to critical utility easements in case of an emergency (e.g., water main breaks).