

VILLAGE of PALATINE

HOLIDAY TREE LIGHTING



On Saturday, November 21, at 5 p.m. the Village of Palatine would like to invite the community to help kick-off the holiday season at our annual Holiday Tree Lighting event at Towne Square Park.

To help mitigate the spread of COVID-19, this year, we're asking the community to "Park and Watch" the holiday tree lighting from your car and see Santa light up the Towne Square. Afterward, you can head south, in your car, on Greeley Street, between Slade Street and Palatine Road, to wave to Santa.

There will be parking available around Towne Square and in the nearby parking lots.

The Village asks that everyone remain in their cars during the event.



DRIVE-THRU WINTER FARMERS' MARKET BEGINS NOVEMBER 7!

Palatine's Winter Farmers' Market is expanding to an outdoor drive through format beginning November 7, 2020 and will be open the first and third Saturday of every month between November and April (no Jan. 2) from 10 am to noon. The Winter Market is located in the Palatine Metra Train Station parking lot, 137 W. Wood Street in downtown Palatine.

All orders should be placed by noon on Wednesday for pick up at the Market on Saturday. Vendors will place pre-ordered, pre-paid products in customer's trunks.

All winter long, vendors will offer an assortment of goods such as Katic Breads, which will bring orders every Saturday from 10 to 11 am. Fresh, organically raised turkeys, for Thanksgiving, from Hasselmann Farms. Three produce vendors you're used to seeing in the summer will be filling orders in November for squash, root vegetables like potatoes, onions, beets and carrots. Garlic Underground will have



pearl potatoes, micro greens and, of course, fresh and powdered garlic. Vegetarians and vegans may enjoy Traci's International Soups and The Eating Well's vegan burgers, spanakopita and much more. PugaMello Brazilian chocolates also offers vegan chocolates and liquor truffles.

Soft Wave Fish Company will have their full menu of fresh and frozen fish, and Stamper Cheese will offer their full line of unique cheeses direct from the cheese makers in Wisconsin. There will also be Honey, Cookies and Devil's Gate Coffee. And, yes, Barb will be accessible by car and on foot with her dog treats.

For a detailed list of vendors and how to order visit **Palatine Sister Cities Winter Market**.



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VILLAGE OF PALATINE

200 East Wood Street
Palatine, IL 60067
www.palatine.il.us
village@palatine.il.us

VILLAGE HALL HOURS
8 am to 4 pm
Monday through Friday

VILLAGE PHONE NUMBERS

Emergency.....911
Village Hall.....358-7500
TDD (Emergency).....911
Village Action Line705-5200
Community Services.....359-9042
Fire (Non-Emergency)....202-6340
Police (Non-Emergency) 359-9000
Public Works.....705-5200

Mayor
Jim Schwantz.....359-9007
jschwantz@palatine.il.us

Village Clerk
Margaret R. Duer.....359-9051
mduer@palatine.il.us

District 1
Tim Millar.....894-0001
tmillar@palatine.il.us

District 2
Scott Lamerand.....894-0002
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District 3
Doug Myslinski.....894-0003
dmyslinski@palatine.il.us

District 4
Greg Solberg.....894-0004
gsolberg@palatine.il.us

District 5
Kollin Kozlowski.....894-0005
kkozlowski@palatine.il.us

District 6
Brad Helms894-0006
bhelms@palatine.il.us

Village Manager
Reid Ottesen.....359-9050
rottesen@palatine.il.us

All phone numbers are (847) area code unless otherwise noted.



NEW CITIZEN SELF SERVICE PORTAL (CSS) GOES LIVE MONDAY, NOVEMBER 9TH!

On Monday, November 9, the Village of Palatine is implementing a new on-line customer self service portal. Through the Citizen Self Service (CSS) portal, residents, contractors, and business owners will be able to search for an address or parcel, apply for a permit or license, request an inspection, and more. The CSS portal will also provide residents, contractors, and business owners the ability to start and save permit or plan applications for submittal at a later date and receive updates on submittals and requests in real time.



The CSS portal will bring our residents and businesses into the community development process by providing online access to information. Online tools help to ensure effective communication while eliminating the need for a phone call or office visit. Residents, contractors, and business owners will be able to search for an address or parcel, apply for a permit or license, request an inspection, pay invoices, and more 24/7/365.

Please watch for more updates regarding the implementation of the Village's Citizen Self Service (CSS) portal and related issues on our [website](#).

PALATINE VILLAGE HALL WILL BE CLOSED

Thursday, November 26 & Friday, November 27, 2020
In Observance of Thanksgiving

Thursday, December 24 &
Friday, December 25, 2020
In Observance of Christmas

Friday, January 1, 2021
In Observance of New Year's Day

PREPARING FOR WINTER WEATHER

The way to avoid frostbite and hypothermia is to plan for extreme cold before it arrives. Below are some tips to help you prepare for the winter months ahead.

CHECK THE FORECAST

Make checking the forecast part of your regular routine so you will know when to expect cold weather. Visit weather.gov or your favorite weather app, station, etc.

ADJUST YOUR SCHEDULE

If possible, adjust your schedule to avoid being outside during the coldest part of the day, typically the early morning. Try to find a warm spot for your children while waiting for the school bus outside.

PROTECT YOUR PETS AND OTHER PROPERTY

Make sure your pets have plenty of food and water. Additionally, make sure that they are not overly exposed to the extreme cold. Take precautions to ensure your water pipes do not freeze. Know the temperature thresholds of your plants.



UPDATE YOUR WINTER CAR SURVIVAL KIT

Make sure your car or vehicle has at least a half a tank of gas during extreme cold situations so that you can stay warm if needed.

Jumper cables, flares or reflective triangles are great extras

Flashlights: Replace the batteries before the winter season starts and pack some extras

First Aid Kit: Also check your purse or bag for essential medications

Baby, special needs gear: If you have a baby or family member with special needs, pack diapers and any special formula or food

Food: Stock non-perishable food such as canned food and a can opener, dry cereal and protein rich foods like nuts and energy bars

Water: Have at least 1 gallon of water per person per day for at least 3 days

Basic toolkit: Pliers, wrench, screwdriver

Pet supplies: Food and water

Radio: Battery or hand cranked

Cat litter or sand: For better tire traction

Shovel: To dig out snow

Ice scraper: Even if you usually park in a garage, have one in the car.

Clothes: Make sure you dress for the weather in warm clothes, gloves, hat, sturdy boots, jacket and an extra change of clothes for the cold

Warmers: Pack extra for body, hands and feet

Blankets or sleeping bags: You will be glad to have the extra protection if you become stranded in traffic

Charged Cell Phone: Keep a spare charger and charging cord in your car as well

FINAL CURBSIDE LEAF COLLECTION

Public Works crews have been busy collecting leaves this fall season! Each Palatine single-family residence still has two leaf pickup opportunities remaining; one scheduled collection day and the final all zone collection.

Visit palatine.il.us and search 'collection day lookup' to lookup your collection zone and scheduled day.

All raked leaves must be put into the street and ready for pick up no later than 7 am on scheduled days, but no earlier than 4 pm on the day prior to collection.

The final "**ALL ZONE**" collection will take place the week of Monday, November 16.

All zones must have the final collection of leaves out on the street by 7 am on that day. Crews will start the final pickup on Monday and continue throughout the week until all the leaves have been collected. Only one pass will be made down each street. Leaf piles set out after crews have cleaned the street will not be collected and must be bagged for the weekly household yard waste pickup.

To review the collection guidelines, visit palatine.il.us and search 'leaf collection'.

Additional Pickups

The Village does not anticipate adding any additional leaf pickups this season. We will continue to monitor the weather and announce if conditions allow for an additional all zone sweep on our website, in the weekly emailed PalatineE-Newsletter and on our Facebook page.

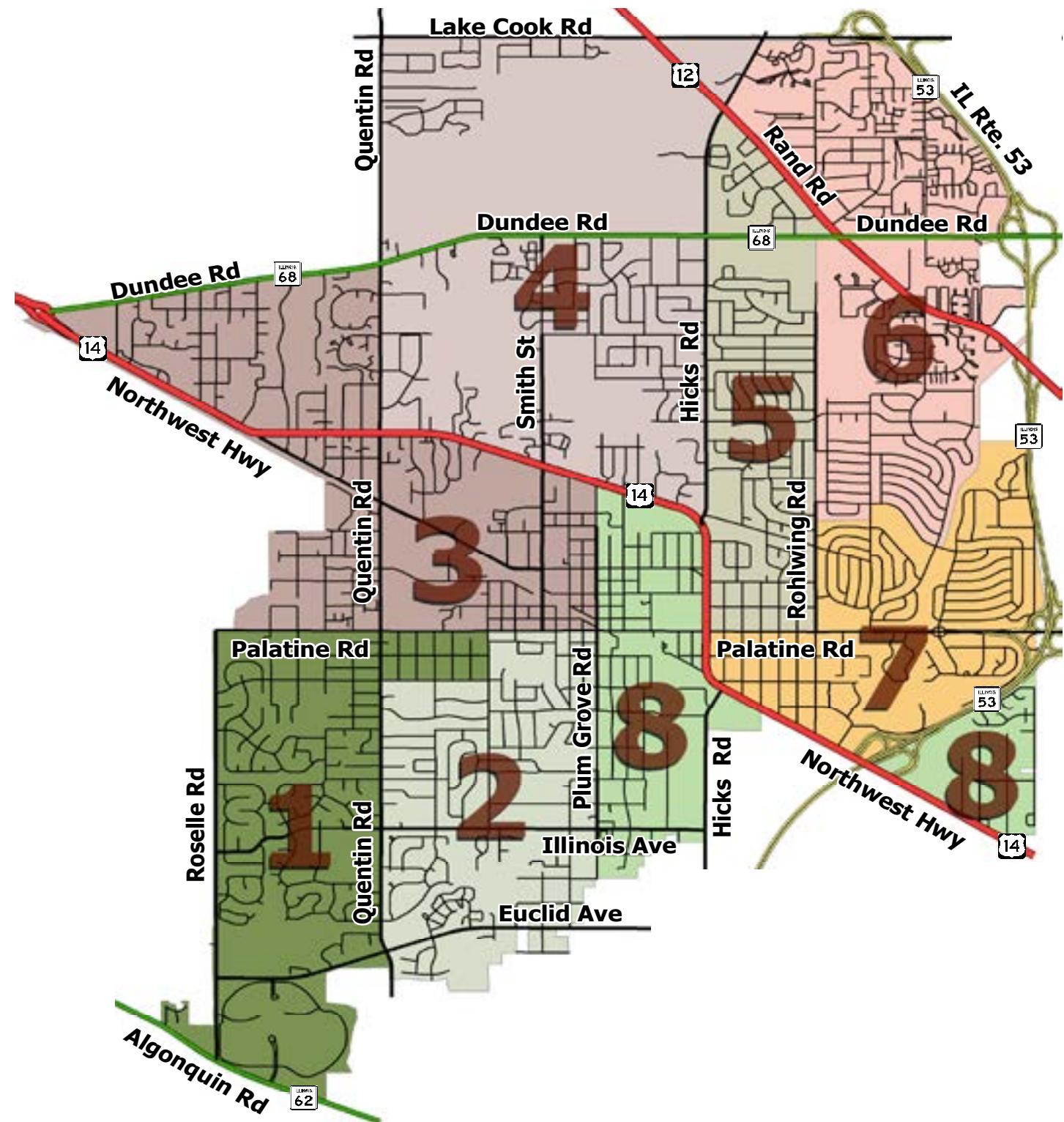
Bag Leaves for Pickup

Residents may continue to bag fallen leaves for their weekly household refuse pickup. The final scheduled pickup for curbside bagged yard waste and bundled brush will occur the week of December 14, 2020.

For more information, call the Public Works Department at (847)705-5200 or email us at PublicWorks@palatine.il.us.

ZONE	DAY/DATE
1	MON., NOV. 2
2	TUES., NOV. 3
3	WED., NOV. 4
4	THURS., NOV. 5
5	MON., NOV. 9
6	TUES., NOV. 10
7	WED., NOV. 11
8	THURS., NOV. 12

ALL ZONES
MON., NOV. 16



ADOPT-A-HYDRANT PROGRAM



The Palatine Fire Department needs your help this winter to clear snow away from the more than 3,500 fire hydrants within the Village. Many of our fire hydrants have already been adopted, but many more still need individuals to help ensure they are cleared for the public's safety. During the winter months, heavy snowfall makes finding and accessing fire hydrants extremely difficult for firefighters, and during an emergency - every second counts! The Fire Department is asking residents, business owners, and local civic groups to consider participating in the Adopt-A-Hydrant program.

Consider adopting a hydrant or two near your home, organization, or business. Commit to keeping them clear of snow after snowfall. To Adopt-A-Hydrant, click [here](#).

When clearing a fire hydrant, snow should be removed about three (3) feet away from the hydrant in all directions, with a pathway cleared between the hydrant and the roadway. Please exercise caution when shoveling because of the potential for vehicle traffic nearby. Do not stand in the street when clearing the hydrant and be careful not to slip and fall out into the roadway.

The Fire Department appreciates all of those that have already adopted a hydrant and encourages others to become partners through this valuable public safety program. For more information visit palatine.il.us and search 'Adopt-A-Hydrant' or call us at 847-202-6340. Send us pictures of your adopted hydrant to Firefighter Patrick Nyczaj at pnyczaj@palatine.il.us.

2020-2021 HOLIDAY WASTE COLLECTION SCHEDULE

Mark your calendar for the below holidays that will affect single-family solid waste collection by Groot Industries. For those holidays not listed, solid waste collection will take place as regularly scheduled. Save and post this handy schedule for reference throughout the year and save yourself from hauling the trash to the curb a day early or missing your collection entirely.

Week of	Holiday	Collection
December 21, 2020	Christmas	No Change
December 28, 2020	New Year's Day.....	No Change
May 31, 2021.....	Memorial Day	All collection one day later
September 6, 2021.....	Labor Day	All collection one day later
December 27, 2021	Christmas	No Change

Curbside collection of bagged and bundled yard waste ends the week of December 14, 2020 and resumes the week of April 5, 2021.

For more information, contact the Environmental Health Division at 847-359-9042.



PALATINE SNOW PLOWING QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

The Public Works Department receives a variety of information requests from residents all through the year, especially during the winter when snow falls. Here are the most frequently asked questions with answers.

How many miles is the Public Works Department responsible for plowing? The Village is responsible for 167 center lane miles of snow and ice control.

How are those miles divided up to plow? The 167 miles are divided into 11 sections with two trucks typically assigned to each section or route in a plowing event. Public Works is also responsible for plowing the commuter lots, five Fire Stations, Police Headquarters, and Village Hall parking lots.

Why are two trucks assigned to a route? Tandem plows clear street pavement from center line to curb in one pass.

Why don't the plows clear the whole street at once? Drivers make a preliminary pass during the storm to open up the streets. Final curb-to-curb clearing occurs after it stops snowing.

How long does it take to plow a route? Depending on the type and amount of snowfall, it takes approximately seven hours to clear 15 miles of streets. A typical route is 15 miles.

Are the same drivers assigned to the same route each time they plow or salt a route? Yes. Two drivers are assigned to each route for a plowing event, and one driver for a salting event.

For some storms, plows are out for most of the day and night. Is the same driver out there that whole time? No. The Department has two fully staffed crews - front line snow plow drivers and back-up drivers, which include part-time seasonal drivers hired each year.

Where do drivers start plowing? Major streets are plowed first, such as Northwest Highway, Palatine and Hicks Roads, followed by secondary and residential streets, including cul-de-sacs.

Are there roads Palatine does not plow? Yes, the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) is responsible for Rand, Dundee, and Algonquin Roads, Route 53, and Hicks Road north of Dundee Road. Cook County is responsible for Quentin and Roselle Roads, and Euclid Avenue.

Can I park on the street during a storm? No. On-street parking is not allowed after a snowfall of two or more inches, until the street has been plowed. Illegally parked cars that hinder plowing operations may be ticketed and towed.

Some sidewalks are cleared by the Village, but not all - why is that? The Village Council designated certain sidewalks to be cleared when there is more than three inches of snowfall. These sidewalks are the main routes to schools or on higher volume roads to help keep school children and other pedestrians from walking in the streets.

Am I required to shovel the public sidewalk adjacent to my property? No. However, the Village encourages all residents to clear the sidewalks for the safety of pedestrians and children walking to school.

If I shovel the public sidewalk adjacent to my property, where can I put the snow? Place the snow on the parkway, or in the front yard, in a manner to avoid injury or limited access to any person, animal, or property.

Can I put snow on a public sidewalk or street? No. This includes the portion of the sidewalk that crosses over a driveway apron. Village ordinances prohibit plowing,

blowing, or shoveling of snow into the street, on the public sidewalk, or on a parkway across from your property. These actions can create hazardous conditions for both motorists and pedestrians.

If I hire a snow plow contractor, who is responsible for notifying that contractor of the Village ordinances?

Property owners are responsible for the actions of their contractors. Non-owners of property should forward this information to the party responsible for conducting the snow plowing and snow removal operations.

Can children build snow forts in the parkway? No. Playing in or near the street, especially while snow and ice control operations are in process, poses a safety hazard for children. Snow forts also can obstruct drivers' vision when backing out of driveways.

The snow plow driver hit my mailbox. How do I receive mail now? It is very difficult, especially on cul-de-sacs, to completely clear snow without risking damage to mailboxes or posts. If a curbside mailbox is damaged by a Village snow plow, call Public Works at (847) 705-5200 and the Village will either repair the box and/or post at no cost to the homeowner or bring out a temporary mailbox so residents can receive mail delivery. Keep in mind, the Village is not responsible for mailboxes that do not meet Village code or if they are damaged by non-Village vehicles. The Village's total liability is limited to the cost of replacing a standard metal mailbox and/or a standard pre-treated wood post.

The snow plow tore up the grass in the parkway. How do I request restoration? Call Public Works at (847) 705-5200 or email us at PublicWorks@palatine.il.us as soon as the damage is noticed. Turf will be restored in the spring, and usually occurs in early April. Public Works crews will level out any areas with plow damage and then apply grass seed. Residents are asked to water the area until the grass has established.

Why does the snow plow driver always seem to fill driveways with snow after residents have cleared away the snow? This is not done intentionally. The goal is to have safe roads for residents and other motorists traveling within the Village. When possible, save time and prevent frustration by waiting to clear the bottom of the driveway until after the plows have completed their final pass.

For more information or to request copies of Village ordinances relating to snow plowing, please call Public Works at **847-705-5200**, email us at PublicWorks@palatine.il.us, or visit palatine.il.us and search 'snow plow facts'.

VILLAGE SEEKS CDL DRIVERS FOR SNOW PLOWING SEASON

The Village is still accepting applications for seasonal snow plow drivers! Experienced CDL drivers who hold a valid Illinois Class B commercial driver's license with air brakes endorsement are needed to assist Public Works with snow plowing during the winter season. Candidates must be available to work flexible hours.

These positions are temporary and require a high school diploma or equivalent. Snow plowing experience is a plus, and starting pay is \$20 / hour.

Apply online at palatine.il.us and click on the 'Employment' button. Positions are open until filled.

FEBRUARY CURBSIDE BRUSH COLLECTION

A curbside brush collection for single-family residences will occur ONLY ONCE during the winter season in February of 2021. All loose brush must be set out at the curb no later than 7 am on Monday, February 1, 2021.

GUIDELINES

- Brush must be 8 inches or less in diameter to accommodate the chipper.
- Firewood, tree stumps, and root balls are not accepted because of the potential damage to the chipper.
- Clean Christmas trees (without lights or decorations) will be accepted.
- Cut ends of limbs must face the street, with branches as long as possible.



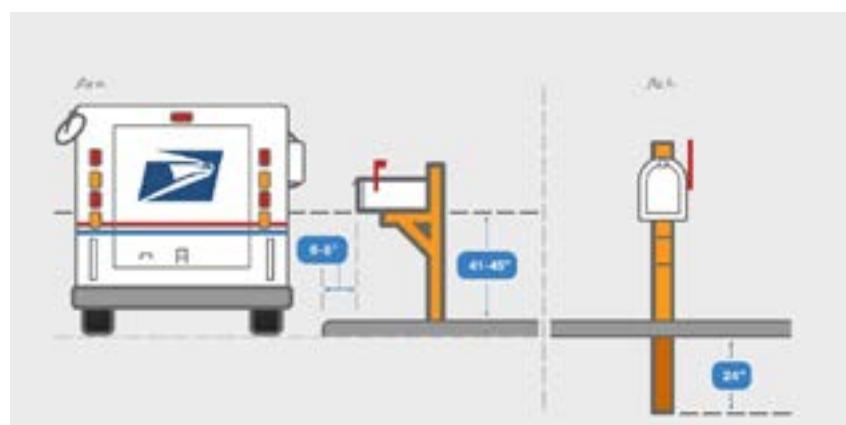
Crews will pass down each street just once. Piles set out after February 1 will be left at the curb. If amounts of brush are excessive, the collection may take the entire week to finish. The collection may also be delayed due to snow. The Village will monitor the weather conditions and announce if the collection week will be rescheduled on our website at palatine.il.us, in the weekly emailed PalatinE-Newsletter (sign up to receive this notification at palatine.il.us and select 'Notify Me') and on our Village of Palatine Facebook page.

PROTECT YOUR MAILBOX THIS WINTER WITH PROPER PLACEMENT

During winter, mailboxes are occasionally damaged during snow plowing operations. If a Village snowplow hits a properly installed mailbox that meets Village Code, the Public Works Department will repair or replace the mailbox and/or post at no cost to the homeowner. The Village's total liability is limited to the cost of replacing a standard metal mailbox and/or a standard pre-treated wood post. The Village is not responsible for mailboxes damaged by non-Village vehicles.

Proper placement and mounting of a mailbox can help prevent snowplows from striking it. According to U.S. Postal Service (USPS) regulations, mailboxes should be placed so that the front of the box is set 6 to 8 inches back from the curb or edge of the pavement. There should also be 41 to 45 inches from the bottom of the box to the top of the curb or road. For additional placement guidelines and installation tips, please visit the [USPS website](http://usps.com).

Residents who believe their curbside mailbox was damaged by a Village snowplow may report it to the Public Works Department at (847) 705-5200 or by email at PublicWorks@palatine.il.us. Damage must be reported as soon as it is noticed.



BEWARE OF DANGEROUS ICE CONDITIONS

Changing temperatures during the winter months have the potential to create deceiving and dangerous ice conditions on our local ponds and lakes that may make them unsafe to stand on or walk over.

The Palatine Fire Department would like all residents to remember the below safety precautions and helpful information when winter arrives.

- Never leave a child or pet unattended around icy bodies of water.
- Always keep pets on a leash so they can't venture onto the ice.
- If a pet falls through the ice, do not attempt to rescue it. Call 911 for help.
- Ice seldom freezes or thaws at a uniform rate. It can be safe in one area and dangerously thin in another. As temperatures change so does the condition of the ice.

IF YOU OR SOMEONE ELSE FALLS THROUGH THE ICE

If you fall through the ice, try not to panic. Place your hands and arms onto the ice and place your body against the ice. Kick hard with your legs and try to pull yourself out of the water and onto the ice. When you get onto the ice, remain lying down and try to roll away from the hole and crawl back towards the shore.

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO IF YOU SEE SOMEONE FALL THROUGH

The most important thing you can do is to call 911 immediately. Getting help, on the way early, can be the difference between life and death. If you decide to take action remember to "Reach, Throw, and Go". Try to reach the person with a pole, ladder, tree branch or another long object.

You can try to throw a rope, jumper cables, a life vest or similar item to the person in the water and pull them to safety. The most dangerous thing you can do is to go out onto the ice and try to make a rescue. The ice has already broken from the weight of the first person and will most likely break when you go out on it too. Do not stand or walk near the hole, if the ice broke once it will break again.

The Palatine Fire Department has 15 certified rescue divers and a variety of specialty equipment for performing ice and water rescues. The Department is committed to providing the highest level of service to our residents and guests in our community. Please remember to be safe around (or what appears to be) frozen bodies of water.



NOVEMBER COAT DRIVE BENEFITTING P.A.T.H.

The Palatine Police Department will serve as a drop off location for gently used and new winter coats of all sizes.

The coats will be collected in the lobby of the Palatine Police Station November 2nd thru November 30th.

The collection will be donated to the Palatine Assistance Through Hope (P.A.T.H.) program.

For more information and tax receipts visit the P.A.T.H. [website](http://pathpalatine.org).

Much appreciation to all who donate!



DON'T LET YOUR CHECK TAKE A BATH!!!

Check washing is a real thing, a real BAD thing. The Palatine Police Department has taken several reports of fraud lately, as a result of checks being "washed." What is it? Well, you write a check to pay for something, say, a utility bill. You place it in your mailbox and put your flag up for the mail carrier to pick up. However, a thief grabs it first from your mailbox and heads off to commit their crime. The thief uses a combination of household products to make a solution that can dilute and "free" the ink from the check once it has soaked for a while. The thief allows your check to dry, and voila! The check is then made out to the fraudster and they cash the check somewhere. It can take days, weeks, or longer for you to realize what happened.

There are quite a few measures you can take to prevent yourself from becoming a victim. The Palatine Police Crime Prevention Unit urges anyone who writes checks to take the following precautions:

- Consider paying your bills online, avoiding the risk of check washing altogether (use strong passwords)
- Purchase a non-ink soluble pen to use strictly when writing checks. Keep that pen with your checkbook so you always have it handy. These types of pens are sold in drug and office stores. Look for the words "anti-identity theft", "fraud protection", or "prevents check washing". The ink in these types of pens is fragmented, so it gets "trapped" in the fibers of paper. Soaking it does not free this type of ink from paper.
- Mail anything containing a check at a United States Post Office or an official USPS mailbox.
- Keep an eye on your bank statements. Call your bank directly if you see anything unusual.



KEEP THE WREATH RED

The Palatine Fire Department will again be participating in the annual "Keep the Wreath Red" holiday safety program. This public-safety campaign was started in the mid 1950's to increase fire safety awareness during the holidays.

Between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day, each of our five (5) fire stations will display a wreath decorated only in red lights. In the event of a "holiday related fire," we will exchange a red bulb with a white bulb. We hope, as you pass the wreaths you will consider potential fire safety problems in your home and take the time to correct them. Some safety considerations include:



- Check all holiday lighting for wear or damaged wiring and replace as needed.
- Use indoor/outdoor lighting and extension cords where they are intended.
- Do not run lighting or extension cords through windows, doors or across sidewalks.
- Do not overload electrical cords. If it is hot, it is overloaded!
- Turn off all holiday lighting prior to leaving or going to bed.
- If displaying a live tree, use a sturdy tree stand and water the tree often.
- Keep the tree, wreaths and all holiday decorations away from any heat source; such as fireplaces, space heaters, candles and heating ducts.
- Make sure smoke alarms are tested and in good working order with fresh batteries.
- Check the age of all smoke alarms. If they are more than 10 years old, replace them.
- Keep and maintain a Carbon Monoxide alarm near all bedrooms.
- Use only sturdy candle holders and only place on firm, uncluttered surfaces.
- Do not place candles in windows near blinds and curtains.
- Have fireplaces and wood-burning stoves cleaned regularly.

All of the members of the Palatine Fire Department wish you a safe and happy holiday season.

FIREPLACE AND WOOD/PELLET BURNING STOVE SAFETY?



While fireplaces and wood/pellet burning stoves conjure up images of warmth and comfort, the chimneys and vent pipes they connect to represent a significant source of home heating fires. One third of these fires are due to creosote buildup on the walls of the chimney or vent pipe. Creosote is a sticky, oily, combustible substance suspended in the smoke and produced when wood does not burn completely. Creosote rises into the chimney or vent pipe and deposits on the walls.

As these fires are largely preventable, the Palatine Fire Department is encouraging you take a few simple actions to reduce the risk of a chimney or vent pipe fire in your home.

- The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) and the U.S. Fire Administration (USFA) recommend chimney and vent pipes be inspected by a qualified professional each year and cleaned if necessary. Failure to clean chimneys and vents is the most common cause of fires.
- Install the stove, chimney connectors and chimneys per the manufacturer's instructions. Better yet, have a trained professional do the installation. A building permit is required for installation.
- Only install wood stoves with the label of a qualified testing laboratory, UL or FM.
- Burn only dry and seasoned wood or pellets.
- Start the fire with kindling or a small amount of newspaper, never with a flammable liquid, such as lighter fluid, kerosene or gasoline.
- Never burn paper, wrapping paper, cardboard or plastics to dispose of them.
- Keep anything that can burn at least three feet away from fireplaces and stoves.
- Allow ashes to cool completely before disposing. Dispose of ashes in a tightly covered metal container. Keep the ash container outside and at least 10 feet away from the home. Not in the garage or on a deck or balcony.

At best, not heeding this advice could result in superficial property damage. At worst, you could lose the comfort and safety of your home or a loved one who may be unable to escape a preventable fire.

- In addition to the above, ensure your home has functioning smoke alarms in every bedroom, outside each sleeping area and on every level of the home.
- Check that your home has interconnected smoke alarms - when one sounds, they all sound. If not, replace with new smoke alarms that can be connected through Bluetooth technology.
- Test your smoke alarms at least once a month.
- Practice your home fire escape drill at www.nfpa.org/Public-Education.

With temperatures dropping and the increased use of alternative heating sources to heat homes the Palatine Fire Department urges you to get your home's fireplace chimney and stove vent pipes inspected and cleaned as soon as possible. For more heating fire safety advice visit www.nfpa.org/winter.

THE MOST DANGEROUS TIME TO DRIVE

As we 'Fall Back' to Shorter Days, Take Extra Care on the Road

Shorter days, fatigue, compromised night vision, rush hour and impaired drivers are some of the risks we face when driving at night. These risks become especially pronounced moving into the weekend, with fatal crashes peaking on Saturday nights, according to NSC analysis of NHTSA data.

When Daylight Saving Time ends – for 2020, that's 2 am Sunday, Nov. 1 – many people will find themselves spending more time driving in the dark. Depth perception, color recognition and peripheral vision can be compromised in the dark, and the glare of headlights from an oncoming vehicle can temporarily blind a driver.

Even with high-beam headlights on, visibility is limited to about 500 feet (250 feet for normal headlights) creating less time to react to something in the road, especially when driving at higher speeds.



WHAT SHOULD YOU DO TO COMBAT DARKNESS?

Aim your headlights correctly, and make sure they're clean

Dim your dashboard

Look away from oncoming lights

If you wear glasses, make sure they're anti-reflective

Clean the windshield to eliminate streaks

Slow down to compensate for limited visibility and reduced stopping time

COMPROMISED NIGHT VISION

Night vision is the ability to see well in low-light conditions. As we age, we have greater difficulty seeing at night. A 50-year-old driver may need twice as much light to see as well as a 30-year-old. At age 60 and older, driving can become even more difficult, according to the American Optometric Association. Some older drivers also may have compromised vision due to cataracts and degenerative eye diseases.

The AOA recommends older drivers:

Have annual vision exams

Reduce speed

Take a driving course; even experienced drivers can benefit from a refresher course, and some of the rules have probably changed

Minimize distractions, like talking with passengers or listening to the radio

Check with your doctor about side effects of prescription drugs

Limit driving to daytime hours if necessary

FATIGUE

A National Sleep Foundation poll says 60% of adults have driven while they were tired, and another 37%, or 103 million people, have fallen asleep at the wheel. Of those, 13% say they fall asleep while driving at least once a month, and 4% say they have caused a crash by falling asleep while driving. The reasons are many – shift work, lack of quality sleep, long work hours, sleep disorders – and it doesn't only happen on lengthy trips.

These staggering numbers are backed up by a report by NHTSA that 100,000 police-reported crashes are a result of driver fatigue. Most crashes or near-misses happen at the times you would expect drivers to be tired: 4 to 6 am, midnight to 2 am and 2 to 4 pm, according to NSF.

Drowsy driving puts everyone on the road at risk. Losing two hours of sleep has the same effect on driving as having three beers, and tired drivers are three times more likely to be in a car crash if they are fatigued.

The National Sleep Foundation offers this advice:

Get seven or more hours of sleep a night

Don't drive if you've been awake for 16 hours or more

Stop every two hours to rest

Pull over and take a nap if you're drowsy

Travel during times you are normally awake

RUSH HOUR

Evening rush hour (between 4 and 7 pm weekdays) is a dangerous time to drive due to crowded roadways and drivers eager to get home after work. In winter, it's dark during rush hour, compounding an already dangerous driving situation.

How can you make it home safely during rush hour?

Don't be an impatient driver; slow down

Stay in your lane and beware of drivers who dart from lane to lane

Even though the route may be familiar, don't go on autopilot; stay alert

In unfamiliar areas, consult a map before you go and memorize your route

Don't touch your phone, eat, drink or do other things that are distracting

IMPAIRED DRIVERS

Nearly 30 people die every day in crashes that involve a driver impaired by alcohol, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Drivers impaired by prescription medicines and other drugs increase that number significantly. Impaired drivers are most frequently on the road after dark – particularly between the hours of midnight and 3 am on weekends.

While drunk driving has declined by about one-third since 2007, the number of drivers under the influence of drugs has increased. Between 2013 and 2014, 22% of drivers tested positive for a drug that would cause impairment, according to a roadside survey conducted by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. NHTSA also found that the prevalence of THC (found in marijuana) among drivers on weekend nights increased 48% since 2007, from 8.6% of drivers to 12.6%. Many states have not yet updated their impaired driving laws to address this growing problem.

STAY ALERT, STAY ALIVE

While we do only one quarter of our driving at night, 50% of traffic deaths happen at night. It doesn't matter whether the road is familiar or not, driving at night is always more dangerous. More than 40,000 people were killed in car crashes in 2016, according to Injury Facts. By taking some extra precautions, we can all contribute to reducing these numbers.

HOME FIRE CHECKLIST

If there is a fire, you may have less than 3 minutes to get out of your home. Talk about what you should do to be safe. Make sure everyone in your home knows what to do if there is a fire.



Put a check in front of each statement that is true for your home.

- Do you have at least one smoke detector per floor and one per bedroom?
- Do you have a working carbon monoxide alarm? Is it less than 7 years old?
- Have all the alarms been tested within the past month and the batteries changed within 6 months?
- If you use space heaters are they 3 feet from drapes, furniture, or combustibles which might catch on fire? Are they on a noncombustible level surface? Do they have tip over protection?
- Are matches and lighters kept out of the reach of young children?
- Are all electric cords in good condition?
- Are all electric cords kept in the open, not under rugs, doorways, or able to be caught in drawers?
- If you must use an extension cord, is it the proper size for the appliance? Do you use power strips instead of multi-adapters?
- Are the stove and oven clean and free of grease? Are combustibles cleared from around the stove?
- Do you stay in the kitchen when cooking, not wear loose clothing, and turn pot and pan handles away from the edge?
- Do you have a home escape plan? Have you practiced it?
- Is the area around the furnace and hot water heater free of any combustibles for at least 3 feet on all sides?
- Do you clean your dryer lint screen after every use?
- Have you changed your furnace filter?
- Do you have a fire extinguisher in the house and know how to use it? Is it charged and in good condition?
- Is the water heater turned down to medium, or < 125 degrees?

Further questions can be addressed to Lt. Shane Koeneman,
skoeneman@palatine.il.us or 847-202-6340.

To learn more about fire prevention visit www.usfa.fema.gov