

INTRODUCED: April 13, 2026

AN ORDINANCE No. 2026-089

To amend City Code § 24-34, concerning duty to remove snow from paved sidewalks, to modify responsibilities, penalties, and definitions.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Patron – Vice President Jordan

\_\_\_\_\_  
Approved as to form and legality  
by the City Attorney  
\_\_\_\_\_

PUBLIC HEARING: APR 27 2026 AT 6 P.M.

THE CITY OF RICHMOND HEREBY ORDAINS:

§ 1. That section 24-34 of the Code of City of Richmond (2020) be and is hereby **amended** as follows:

**Sec. 24-34. Duty to remove snow and ice from paved sidewalks.**

(a) It shall be the duty of every occupant, except in the case of properties with three or more units at which point it will be the duty of the owner, of any land or premises abutting upon any paved sidewalk and the duty of the owner of any unoccupied land or premises abutting upon any paved sidewalk to remove and clear away or cause to be removed and cleared away the snow, ice, and any other frozen precipitation from the paved sidewalk abutting such land or premises, in

AYES: \_\_\_\_\_ NOES: \_\_\_\_\_ ABSTAIN: \_\_\_\_\_

ADOPTED: \_\_\_\_\_ REJECTED: \_\_\_\_\_ STRICKEN: \_\_\_\_\_

such manner as not to obstruct the passage of water in the gutters, within six hours after the snow ceases to fall. If snow ~~ceases~~, ice, and any other frozen precipitation cease to fall during the night, removal of snow from the sidewalk before 11:00 a.m. the following morning shall be deemed compliance with this section.

(b) Any person violating this section shall ~~[be guilty of a Class 4 misdemeanor]~~ pay a civil penalty of \$100.00 and, in addition thereto, shall be responsible for the cost of abating the violation. Any abatement costs incurred by the City may be assessed against the owner or other responsible party and collected in the same manner as City taxes.

(c) The ~~[criminal]~~ penalties provided by this section shall not apply to any person who is physically disabled or who is age 65 years or older.

(d) The Chief Administrative Officer may waive penalties for violations occurring during a declared “state of emergency” or “local emergency” as defined in Code of Virginia § 44-146.16.

§ 2. This ordinance shall be in force and effect upon adoption.

**DATE:** March 19, 2026  
**TO:** The Honorable Members of City Council  
**THROUGH:** RJ Warren, Council Chief of Staff  
**THROUGH:** Will Perkins, Senior Legislative Services Manager  
**FROM:** The Honorable Katherine Jordan, Councilmember 2<sup>nd</sup> District  
**RE:** To amend § 24-34, concerning duty to remove snow from paved sidewalks to clarify responsibilities, penalties, and definitions.

**CNL-2025-0021**

**PURPOSE:** Patron requests an ordinance to amend Section 24-34 of City Code, concerning duty to remove snow from paved sidewalks, as follows:

1. Shift responsibility to owners for sidewalks fronting large multi-unit (3+) properties. When several occupants (defined as three or more units) share the same sidewalk, it may be unclear which occupants should physically clear away snow and ice from in front of their building following a storm. This change shifts responsibility to property owners in this case to clarify this duty and help ensure more prompt compliance with City Code requirements.
2. Clarify that the duty to remove snow from sidewalks also includes ice and other forms of frozen precipitation. Currently, City Code only references “snow” as the substance to be removed from paved sidewalks. This change adds the phrase “and ice” to make clear that both forms of frozen precipitation are to be removed.
3. Reduce penalty for noncompliance from a Class 4 misdemeanor to a \$100 civil penalty. VA Code § 18.2-11 (d) says the punishment for conviction of a class 4 misdemeanor is a “fine of not more than \$250.” Patron wishes to reduce the penalty for noncompliance to a \$100 civil penalty – an administrative remedy more akin to a parking ticket – that does not result in a criminal record.
4. Add flexibility in enforcement following declared emergencies. Patron wishes to make explicit that City leadership may choose to waive fines associated with violations of this section of City Code following declared local emergencies or states of emergency, as defined in VA Code § 44-146.16.

**BACKGROUND AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:** Patron received significant outreach from the community and local media on improving the City’s enforcement response following the

January 2026 snowstorm. This ordinance serves to update this section of City Code in advance of the next major storm.

**ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC INITIATIVES:**

- Thriving Neighborhoods – Goal D: Keep our neighborhoods safe and prepared.

**FISCAL IMPACT:** Unknown, but likely very small. The City did not issue any fines following the most recent winter weather emergency for non-compliance with this statute, so reducing the penalty from \$250 to \$100 likely will result in no lost revenue or little lost revenue that may otherwise be absorbed within the general operating budget.

**DESIRED EFFECTIVE DATE:** Upon adoption

**REQUESTED INTRODUCTION DATE:** April 13, 2026

**CITY COUNCIL PUBLIC HEARING DATE:** April 27, 2026

**REQUESTED AGENDA:** Consent

**RECOMMENDED COUNCIL COMMITTEE:** Government Operations Standing Committee

**AFFECTED AGENCIES:** Department of Public Works

**RELATIONSHIP TO EXISTING ORD. OR RES.:** None

**ATTACHMENTS:** N/A

**STAFF:** Will Perkins, Senior Legislative Services Manager, (804-382-7811)