

IMPROVING THE APPROACH TO WINTER SIDEWALK MAINTENANCE IN WINTER CITIES: A CASE STUDY OF EDMONTON

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SUMMARY

The overwhelming presence of sidewalks covered in snow, ice and slush in Edmonton during winter are a public health issue and human rights violation. Ice-covered sidewalks present a pertinent danger to pedestrians in Edmonton. What's more, they deny individuals access to their community. The number of emergency room admissions for falls on ice in Edmonton increased by 429% between 2002 and 2018 (Alberta Health), indicating that pedestrians in Edmonton are exposed to an increasingly high risk of injury during the winter months. Poorly maintained winter sidewalks create barriers in the built environment and in many cases, spaces that are accessible in non-winter conditions become inaccessible. In spite of this, Edmonton's ice and snow removal programs continue to prioritize the maintenance of roads while failing to consider the risks and access needs of pedestrians. The contributions to snow and ice control research that does exist in Edmonton have largely focused on road traffic. This research offers the first contribution in support of improved winter maintenance for Edmonton's pedestrian networks. Available relevant literature, health data, and stakeholder's opinion derived from semi-structured interviews are utilized for qualitative analysis. Recommendations for improved policy and programming are provided.