



Methuen Police Department

Quinn Public Safety Building

90 Hampshire Street • Methuen, Massachusetts 01844
TELEPHONE (978) 983-8801 • FAX (978) 725-7804

Scott McNamara

Chief of Police

September 5, 2025

**Methuen City Council
Public Safety Sub-Committee**

41 Pleasant Street
Searles Building, Room 308
Methuen, MA 01844
978-983-8510

Good Evening Councilor Faretra,

Re: City of Methuen Winter Parking Ban Ordinance Update

The City of Methuen is proposing updates to its Winter Parking Ban Ordinance to better facilitate snow and ice removal while ensuring public safety and accessibility.

We are presenting two options for your consideration:

Option 1 allows parking on designated streets on the even-numbered side of the street on even-numbered calendar days and the odd-numbered side of the street on odd-numbered calendar days from midnight to 4:00 P.M. during a declared snow emergency, while prohibiting parking on all streets not so designated. A transition period from 4:00 P.M. to midnight allows parking on both sides of designated streets to give residents time to move vehicles to the correct side before midnight, accommodating those returning home from work. Robust community notifications and alternate parking accommodations will keep residents informed and supported.

Option 2, the preferred option, maintains a complete parking ban on all streets for the entire duration of a declared snow emergency, coupled with stricter fines, towing enforcement, and enhanced notification systems to ensure compliance and safety. Both options include exceptions for handicapped individuals, visiting nurses, and other essential personnel to accommodate their needs. We welcome your feedback on these proposals.

Below, you will find the current Winter Parking Ban Ordinance, followed by the updated draft with details for both options.

**Current City of Methuen Winter Parking Ban Ordinance
Methuen Traffic Rules and Regulations – Article V, Section 9: Winter Parking Ban**

No person shall allow, permit, or suffer any vehicle registered in their name, other than one acting in an emergency, to be parked on any street for a period longer than one hour between the hours of 1:00 A.M. and 6:00 A.M. from December 1 of one year to April 1 of the next year.

Fine: \$25.00 Snow Towing – Methuen Municipal Code, Chapter 9, Section 53

The Director of the Department of Public Works is authorized to order the towing of vehicles interfering with snow or ice removal from any public way, to a convenient place, including a public garage. The vehicle owner is liable for the cost of removal and any storage charges, per Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 40, Section 21, Subsection 16. Violations of this ordinance are punishable by a fine of up to \$50.00 per offense. (Added to 1973 Ordinance by Ord. #42, Jan. 1976)

Option 1

Citywide Parking Ban with Select Streets Allowing Alternate Side Parking

Section 1. Purpose

To ensure effective snow and ice removal and prevent traffic obstructions during winter storms, the City of Methuen establishes this Winter Parking Ban Ordinance.

Section 2. Declared Snow Emergency/Winter Storm Parking Restrictions

Upon authorization by the Chief of Police or their designee, a Declared Snow Emergency Parking Ban shall be in effect. **From December 1 through April 1, parking is permitted only on designated streets** as identified by the City of Methuen, on the even-numbered side of the street on even-numbered calendar days and the odd-numbered side of the street on odd-numbered calendar days. No parking is permitted on any streets not so designated or on the opposite side of designated streets (e.g., odd-numbered side on even-numbered days, or even-numbered side on odd-numbered days), except for the following:

- * Fire, Police, Public Works, Public Safety, or Public Utility Repair vehicles
- * Vehicles displaying a valid handicapped parking placard or plate, provided they are parked in compliance with designated accessible parking spaces or do not obstruct snow removal operations.
- * Vehicles used by visiting nurses or other essential medical personnel providing in-home care, provided they display an official permit issued by the City of Methuen.

To facilitate compliance, a transition period from 4:00 P.M. to midnight is provided each day of a declared snow emergency, during which parking is permitted on both sides of designated streets to allow residents to move vehicles to the correct side (even or odd, based on the calendar day) for the next day's ban period before midnight enforcement begins. Vehicles must be on the correct side by midnight to avoid penalties.

Section 3. Parking Ban Notifications and Information

The City will provide multiple channels to inform residents of a declared snow emergency parking ban, the list of designated streets, the applicable side of the street (based on the calendar day), and the transition period for moving vehicles, ensuring no excuse for violations. The following methods are currently in place or under consideration:

- * Official City of Methuen website: “PARKING-CENTRAL” (includes list of designated streets, side-of-street guidance, and transition period details)
- * City of Methuen social media platforms (e.g., Facebook, Instagram)
- * Automatic alerts via the ALERTme app (signup link: [insert URL])
- * City of Methuen Hyper-Reach notification system
- * Winter Parking Ban information line: 978-983-8643 (updated daily at 4:00 P.M.)

Also Under Consideration:

- * Community information sessions to educate residents on the parking ban, transition period, and compliance requirements
- * Electronic sign boards at key locations displaying real-time snow emergency, designated streets, side-of-street, and transition period information
- * Implementation of a blue light program, similar to the City of Lawrence’s, using visible blue light signals at major intersections to indicate an active snow emergency

Section 4. Parking Accommodations

During declared snow emergencies, the following alternative parking locations are available in addition to designated streets:

- a. Pelham Street Park and Ride
- b. Neil Playstead Ballfields (Lawrence & East Street)
- c. Municipal Parking Lot, Lawrence Street
- d. Municipal Parking Lots, Hampshire Street & Lowell Street (3 lots)
- e. Methuen High School Stadium

Vehicles must be removed from these locations no later than two hours after the snow emergency ends, or they will be subject to towing. Vehicles with valid handicapped placards or permits for visiting nurses/essential medical personnel may remain in designated accessible spaces, provided they do not impede snow removal.

Section 5. Abandoned Vehicles Post-Snowstorm

Vehicles left abandoned, unmoved, or not cleared of snow and ice 48 hours after a snow emergency will be ticketed and towed, except for vehicles with valid handicapped placards or permits for visiting nurses/essential medical personnel that are parked in compliance with this ordinance. All vehicles on public roadways must be fully cleared of snow and ice after a storm.

Section 6. Penalties

- a. Violations **outside a declared snow emergency** (December 1 through April 1): Vehicles parked on any non-designated street or on the incorrect side of a designated street (e.g., odd-numbered side on even-numbered days, or even-numbered side on odd-numbered days) from December 1 through April 1 are subject to the following fines:
 - * First violation: \$100.00 fine
 - * Second and subsequent violations: \$200.00 fine
- b. Violations **during a declared snow emergency**: Vehicles parked on any non-designated street or on the incorrect side of a designated street (e.g., odd-numbered side on even-numbered days, or even-numbered side on odd-numbered days) during a declared snow emergency from midnight to 4:00 P.M., except those exempted under Section 2, are subject to the following:
 - * First violation: \$100.00 fine and towing
 - * Second and subsequent violations: \$200.00 fine and towing

Option 2

City-Wide Parking Ban for the Total Duration of Snow Emergency (Preferred Option)

Section 1. Purpose

To ensure effective snow and ice removal and prevent traffic obstructions during winter storms, the City of Methuen establishes this Winter Parking Ban Ordinance.

Section 2. Declared Snow Emergency/Winter Storm Parking Restrictions

Upon authorization by the Chief of Police or their designee, a Declared Snow Emergency Parking Ban shall be in effect on all city streets. During this ban, no parking is permitted on any streets, except for the following, for the entire duration of the declared snow emergency:

- * Fire, Police, Public Works, Public Safety, or Public Utility Repair vehicles
- * Vehicles displaying a valid handicapped parking placard or plate, provided they are parked in compliance with designated accessible parking spaces or do not obstruct snow removal operations
- * Vehicles used by visiting nurses or other essential medical personnel providing in-home care, provided they display an official permit issued by the City of Methuen

Section 3. Parking Ban Notifications and Information

The City will provide multiple channels to inform residents of a declared snow emergency parking ban, ensuring no excuse for violations. The following methods are currently in place or under consideration:

- * Official City of Methuen website: “PARKING-CENTRAL”
- * City of Methuen social media platforms (e.g., Facebook, Instagram)
- * Automatic alerts via the ALERTme app (signup link: [insert URL])
- * City of Methuen Hyper-Reach notification system
- * Winter Parking Ban information line: 978-983-8643 (updated daily at 4:00 P.M.)

Also Under Consideration:

- * Community information sessions to educate residents on the parking ban and compliance requirements
- * Electronic sign boards at key locations displaying real-time snow emergency information
- * Implementation of a blue light program, similar to the City of Lawrence’s, using visible blue light signals at major intersections to indicate an active snow emergency

Section 4. Parking Accommodations

During declared snow emergencies, the following alternative parking locations are available:

- a. Pelham Street Park and Ride
- b. Neil Playstead Ballfields (Lawrence & East Street)
- c. Municipal Parking Lot, Lawrence Street
- d. Municipal Parking Lots, Hampshire Street & Lowell Street (3 lots)
- e. Methuen High School Stadium

Vehicles must be removed from these locations no later than two hours after the snow emergency ends, or they will be subject to towing. Vehicles with valid handicapped placards or permits for visiting nurses/essential medical personnel may remain in designated accessible spaces, provided they do not impede snow removal.

Section 5. Abandoned Vehicles Post-Snowstorm

Vehicles left abandoned, unmoved, or not cleared of snow and ice 48 hours after a snow emergency will be ticketed and towed, except for vehicles with valid handicapped placards or permits for visiting nurses/essential medical personnel that are parked in compliance with this ordinance. All vehicles on public roadways must be fully cleared of snow and ice after a storm.

Section 6. Penalties

- * First violation: \$100.00 fine

- * Second and subsequent violations: \$200.00 fine
- * Vehicles parked on any public way during a declared snow emergency, except those exempted under Section 2, are subject to towing.

Respectfully,

/s/ Scott J. McNamara

Scott J. McNamara
Chief of Police
Methuen Police Department