



DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

City Hall | 340 North Washington Avenue | Scranton, PA 18503 | 570.348.4118

After Action Report: Winter Storm

January 25, 2026 through February 1, 2026

Background

On or about 6:00 a.m. Sunday, January 25, 2026, Northeastern Pennsylvania experienced a significant snowfall. Snowy conditions lasted for a period of 18 hours, up until 12:00 a.m., Monday, January 26, 2026, and resulted in continuous snow accumulation, which ultimately resulted in 9.7 inches of snow. This event resulted in higher-than-average snowfall than is typically experienced in our region. Municipalities throughout our region faced challenges relative to snow removal and the clearing of roadways, as did the City of Scranton. The City owns approximately 263 miles of public roadways required to be cleared. Immediately following the snow, the City, as well as the overall northeastern Pennsylvania region, also experienced a significant cold weather pattern, with temperatures and windchills dropping to between -6°F and -18°F, respectively from January 25, 2026, to January 31, 2026, further complicating snow removal and plowing efforts. The temperatures above reflect recorded wind chill. The regular temperature values for that same time frame is 7°F to 0°F, with the lowest recorded value being 0° on January 29, 2026, at 2:45 a.m. When road temperatures reach 15° degrees F, salt is rendered ineffective in melting icy and/or snowy conditions on roadways.

In anticipation of the storm, the Mayor, in agreement with the City Controller, issued an Emergency Declaration from January 24, 2026, to February 3, 2026, to ensure that the City had sufficient resources to obtain services and supplies necessary to clear public roadways. Likewise, travel restrictions were implemented, and the City's School District had prepared virtual learning accommodations for the early part of the week, while public transportation available through the COLTS bus system also issued alerts and restrictions.

Consistent with the City's usual protocols in adverse weather events, City officials remained in constant contact with one another to monitor and respond to the storm. Commercial entities and workplaces largely resumed normal operations by Tuesday, January 27, 2026, and schools in the City resumed classes on Thursday, January 29, 2026. This timeline is consistent with reopening of public facilities with that of neighboring urban municipalities, namely the cities of Wilkes Barre and Pittston.

Available Resources

Equipment

The city has 18 plow trucks in its current fleet. The fleet is comprised of:

- 4 Four Wheel Drive Mountain Trucks that require a CDL License;
- 2 Two Wheel Drive Mountain Trucks that require a CDL License;
- 1 Tandem Dump Truck that requires a CDL License; and
- 11 Ford F550's that do not require a CDL License.





DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

City Hall | 340 North Washington Avenue | Scranton, PA 18503 | 570.348.4118

Staffing

DPW currently has a staff of 77 members, including mechanics, 34 of which are members maintaining CDL licenses. These figures do not include additional management personnel and/or Clerical Union staff. Plowing duties may be performed by Operators, Chauffeurs, Operators, and/or Laborers who possess a CDL License. The City also maintained 2 mechanics on duty at all times to ensure vehicles would be repaired timely if necessary.

Materials

The City procures salt annually via the CoStars cooperative purchasing platform. This year, the City contracted with American Rock Salt to obtain 4,500 tons of salt. When these resources were depleted, the City proactively obtained additional salt from Luzerne County and PEMA, ensuring that sufficient supply was on hand as needed. The City also maintained sufficient antiskid material at its disposal heading into the storm.

Communications

City plowing routes are broken out into 9 service areas covering the entirety of the City. Each route prioritizes snow removal along main thoroughfares, hospital routes, and schools. The DPW Director and Supervisors provide advance notice of upcoming shifts to cover these routes and put all available vehicles in the City's fleet in use. City administration maintains a robust chain of communication that includes the Mayor, Business Administration, 311, DPW, and other public safety personnel to track and monitor clean up efforts, as well as to field concerns from the City's healthcare and school officials, as well as the general public.

Response

Throughout the entire snow event, the City deployed the Department of Public Works staff to the fullest available capacity. For every overtime shift, the City issued a minimum call-out list of:

- 15 plow truck drivers
- 2 mechanics
- 1 operator

Daily DPW workforce participation consisted of the following:

- Sunday, January 25, 2026 (24 hours): 24 drivers reported at various times, including 1 operator at the Salt Shed.
- Monday, January 26, 2026 (2:00 PM – 6:00 AM shifts offered in multiple increments to increase coverage): 10 drivers reported, including 1 operator at the Salt Shed.
- Tuesday, January 27, 2026 (2:00 PM – 6:00 AM shifts offered in multiple increments): 12 drivers reported, including 1 operator at the Salt Shed.
- Wednesday, January 28, 2026 (2:00 PM – 6:00 AM shifts offered in multiple increments): 10 drivers reported, including 1 operator at the Salt Shed.
- Thursday, January 29, 2026 (2:00 PM – 6:00 AM shifts offered in multiple increments): 5 drivers reported, including 1 operator at the Salt Shed.



DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

City Hall | 340 North Washington Avenue | Scranton, PA 18503 | 570.348.4118

- Friday, January 30, 2026 (2:00 PM – 6:00 AM shifts offered in multiple increments): 5 drivers reported, including 1 operator at the Salt Shed.
- Saturday, January 31, 2026 (2:00 PM – 6:00 AM shifts offered in multiple increments): 10 drivers reported, including 1 operator at the Salt Shed.
- Following Sunday, February 1, 2026 (2:00 PM – 6:00 AM shifts offered in multiple increments): 24 drivers reported, including 1 operator at the Salt Shed.

The above figures illustrate that insufficient staff reported for overtime to put in use all of the City's available fleet of plow trucks during the majority of the above-listed shifts, despite the City's attempts to reach full capacity for all of the above shifts. Only two of the above shifts were fully staffed to ensure all available vehicles in the City's fleet were in use, namely Sunday, January 25, 2025 and Sunday, February 1, 2026. (It is notable that staff receive double time rates for work performed on Sundays.) Additionally, the above is not reflective of whether an employee completed a full shift or terminated their shift early. Of 33 total available drivers during the storm, 5 drivers worked zero overtime shifts (an additional driver was out on medical leave), and 6 drivers worked only Sunday shifts (double time).

In order to supplement available manpower, pursuant to the Emergency Declaration issued, the City retained outside vendors to perform road plowing and snow removal. Total costs for these services are presently \$344,000, which are anticipated to total approximately between \$400,000 and \$450,000 once all bills are received and processed.

Actionable Items

Technology and Communications

The City has recently implemented a new payroll processing platform. This will provide for more efficient callouts and tracking of regular and overtime shifts.

Prior to this storm event, the City had been implementing the use of GeoTabs to track fleet location as they perform work throughout the City. The City has acquired all needed GeoTabs and are awaiting installation by the vendor on all trucks in the fleet, and would allow for real-time GPS tracking. This data captures driver behavior, fuel efficiency, and routing. Based on data received, routes can be mapped in GIS, and include critical information such as School Bus routes, COLTS bus routes, and main arteries leading into hospitals. Information gained from this tracking will result in the development of a dashboard that can be shared with appropriate City public safety personnel.

During an event of this scale, cross collaboration between pertinent City departments is critical, with a clear and concise chain of command within each department. An Emergency Operations Center (EOC) should be established to ensure a centralized location for communication, with representatives from City Administration, Police, Fire, and DPW present and participating. This will



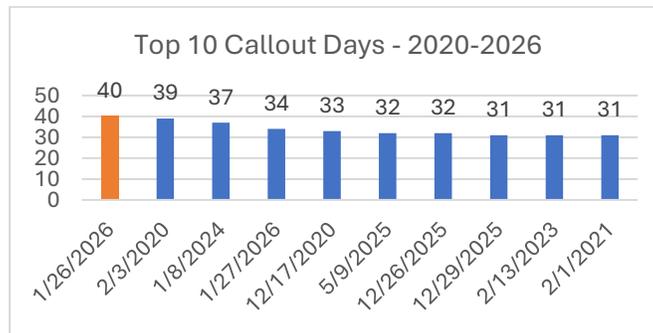
DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

City Hall | 340 North Washington Avenue | Scranton, PA 18503 | 570.348.4118

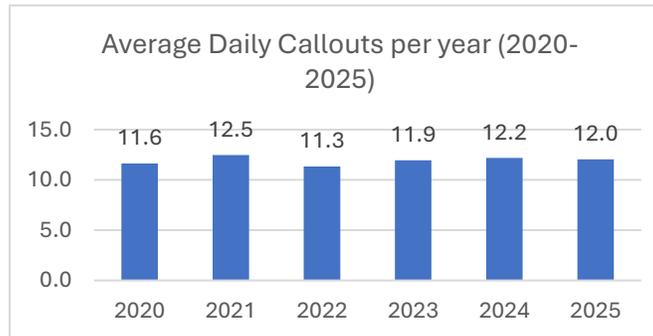
further facilitate dispatching pursuant to the proper Chain of Command, to avoid confusion that may result from orders or directives to staff from others not coordinating response.

Labor

City Officials deployed DPW staff sufficient to reach full capacity throughout the storm event and subsequent clean-up. Despite this, maintaining adequate staffing levels was an ongoing concern during these efforts. Significant callouts occurred throughout. This issue is not isolated to this particular period, as supported by available data. Of note, January 26, 2026, recorded the highest number of absences among DPW staff from 2020 through 2026, with 40 recorded absences.



This figure is far greater than the average daily absences recorded by month, which ranges from between 10 and 15 absences on any given day.



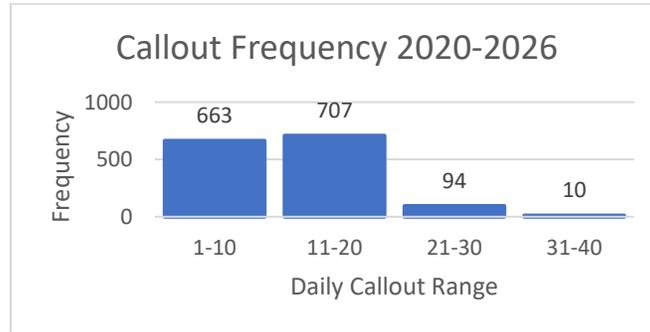
Of the data analyzed, these absence trends have been consistent year-over-year. DPW most often experienced between 11 and 20 employees absent on any given day, with 707 days from 2020 through 2026.





DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

City Hall | 340 North Washington Avenue | Scranton, PA 18503 | 570.348.4118



Data further supports that contract status with the DPW union has not had a material impact on the volume of call outs. In fact, callouts averaged slightly higher during the term of then-current Collective Bargaining Agreements, as opposed to periods of negotiations for new Collective Bargaining Agreements.

In order to address staffing shortages due to callouts, Administration is exploring its options to ensure essential services are being performed to protect the health, welfare, and safety of our residents and infrastructure. The City continues to operate under its current Collective Bargaining Agreement with the DPW union, and is presently in negotiations to update the same. Disciplinary action and ensuring compliance with calls for overtime is under consideration at this time. Additional training and identifying alternative labor staff on a parttime basis to ensure the needs of residents are met are also being evaluated.

Supplemental Services and Equipment

The City will implement new equipment to improve efficiencies. Rubber on the plows will be replaced with metal plating. Blade sizes will be reevaluated. The City will also explore obtaining approximately 12 and 16 snow boxes for the next event. Calibration for spreaders and augers on all trucks will be evaluated to determine of adjustments would be advisable.

If staffing shortfalls continue as they have been trending, the City may consider having one or more vendors available to perform snow plowing and/or removal.

