

FLEETFLOW™ SAFELY REMOVES SNOW FROM FOXBOROUGH PUBLIC SCHOOLS BUS FLEET

Transportation Manager Saves Time and Helps Prevent Shoulder Pain with Automated Snow Removal Machine from Scraper Systems™ by Rite-Hite®

CASE STUDY

QUICK FACTS

ORGANIZATION: Foxborough Public Schools

FLEET: 27 standard school buses

TRANSPORTS: Hundreds of schoolchildren

GOALS: Reduce time and energy to remove snow from school bus roofs

SOLUTION: Scraper Systems™ by Rite-Hite® FleetFlow™

RESULTS: It ran perfectly to clear all rooftops in an hour

THE SITUATION

Foxborough Public Schools in Massachusetts educate approximately 2,500 students at five schools – Foxborough High School, Ahern Middle School, and three elementary schools (Burrell, Igo, and Taylor) from September into June.

Students who live more than a mile from school are eligible to take one of the district's 27 school buses to and from school. An annual snowfall of 46 inches means the district's transportation workers need to be ready to remove snow from the fleet at a moment's notice during winter. Located in the northeast corridor where [Nor'easters](#) commonly blow, some blizzards have buried Foxborough school buses in nearly 3 feet of snow. The area is quite accustomed to significant snowfall and people need to be prepared for it.

School days after one of those blizzards—even a day or two after a “snow day”—means tough sledding for the district's transportation department to get the buses ready for their routes.

REMOVING SNOW THE HARD WAY

Foxborough Public Schools' Transportation Manager Dennis Fletcher and his crew were responsible for clearing snow from the fleet after every snow to make sure buses could safely travel community roads. The task was challenging and dangerous.

“We were doing it with roof rakes, and it took us forever,” said Fletcher. “I'm in my 60s, everyone helping me with it is in their 60s and it's just not fun at all.”

Pulling rooftop snow down onto themselves became common. Additionally, after hours of removing snow, he said everyone's arms felt exhausted and were sore for days. Because it took so long to do,

it meant Fletcher and his team would have to begin raking the snow off roofs hours before buses began their routes—some of which started before 7 a.m.

Despite loathing the job of snow removal, the Foxborough Public Schools' transportation department did it to help ensure the safety of the children on the bus, the bus driver, and other drivers on the road. Fletcher knew that snow blowing off the roof of a bus could potentially hit other cars and create an accident.

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“With the rakes, you can't get all the snow,” Fletcher said. “You'd have maybe a strip of 2 feet or so in the middle of the buses that didn't come off, so you've got that blowing on the road. God forbid an ice chunk falls off and hits a car.”

POTENTIAL FINES

It's because of this danger that Massachusetts has pending laws prohibiting drivers and vehicle owners from operating vehicles carrying any accumulation of snow and ice on them. In the proposed law, commercial vehicle operators can incur fines ranging from \$500 for each offense which does not cause personal injury or property damage to at least \$10,000 for offenses resulting in personal injury or property damage.

Police can already use existing laws to levy fines up to \$200 for driving with an unsecured load, which can include snow and ice on vehicle rooftops. Bus roofs present large areas with rounded edges that make them easy targets for these types of laws.

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THE SOLUTION

After years of using snow rakes, Fletcher discovered a safer and more efficient way to remove snow from buses. The automated snow removal machine FleetFlow™ from Scraper Systems™ by Rite-Hite® was able to do the work of half a dozen workers in a fraction of the time.

“We have a new machine we ran the buses through,” Fletcher said of the FleetFlow. “It ran absolutely perfect [right from the first time we used it]. It only took us an hour and a half to clean off 27 buses.”

“It ran absolutely perfect.”

Fletcher said it's a major difference compared to the many hours it used to take the whole Foxborough crew to remove snow manually, plus it's a lot safer. He anticipates being able to remove snow even more efficiently now that his team has learned the automated process.

The FleetFlow is an adjustable height plow assembly that—as the company name suggests—scrapes snow off the tops of buses when they pass through it. Its ability to remove snow from the unique rooftops of school buses (rounded edges, hatches, vents, lights, antennae, etc.) is what separates the FleetFlow from other automated snow removal machines.



The FleetFlow Model MD-12B can remove up to 12 inches of wet, heavy snow in less than 30 seconds. An up/down pendant control is used to automatically adjust the plow height. There are also more models that can meet operational needs of a wide range of fleet types (from passenger vans to full size buses) and heights (from 75 inches up to 14 feet tall). The machine is portable, which makes it easy to relocate after snow season ends.

Students of Foxborough Public Schools might be disappointed the most recent snow didn't result in a snow day, but Fletcher is glad he and his team can have their buses ready for safe transport thanks to Scraper Systems.

“We're very, very happy,” exclaimed Fletcher. ■



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