

Good Samaritan Fined for Plowing Out Elderly Neighbors

Local News 8 in Idaho [reports](#):

Whenever the snowfall gets bad, you'll find Mitch Fisher riding his ATV with a plow attached on his street. Plowing the snow off the road to make sure things are nice and clear for his family and neighbors.

"I try to clean my spot and all the neighbors around me so we have a nice area to park and pull in," Fisher said. "Also, hopefully, so no one gets stuck in front of my house."

Fisher [told the network](#) he likes "to take care of the neighbors. They're all elderly and I like to help them out."

But for his Good Samaritan-like work, Fisher was fined by a Pocatello, Idaho, police officer. The ticket is for more than \$200 the news outlet [reports](#). (Editor's Update: The charge [was later dropped](#).)

The story reminded me of the story of Taylor Trupiano, a Michigan man who [was ticketed](#) for warming up his car on his own property on a frigid January day.

Fisher's case might even be worse, however. He was fined for going out of his way to assist members of his community, something he had been doing for nine years apparently without incident.

Pocatello Police Chief Scott Marchand of course defended the fine, citing—you guessed it—public safety.

"It is a safety issue for all drivers on the road. I have directed officers who are investigating complaints or who observe people moving snow from private property into city

streets to issue citations if the citizens do not want to comply with the ordinance.”

The statement is no surprise. Law enforcement officials often seem compelled to defend prosecution of the law [no matter how absurd](#). (After I wrote about Trupiano’s fine for warming up his car, I received multiple emails from law enforcement officers who said such measures do help reduce auto theft.)

Even if one accepts Marchand’s reasoning that such laws protect public safety—a dubious claim since Fisher appears to have been plowing people out for nine years without upsetting the delicate balance of safety—one would have to admit there is also a cost to such laws, not least of which is a diminishment of community engagement and mutual support.

I’ve said it before and I’ll say it again: people with power seem much “more apt to inflict pain than to permit pleasure.” (Actually, Bertrand Russell [said it](#). But you get the idea.)

Image Credit: woodleywonderworks bit.ly/1ryPA8o