



FREDERICK COUNTY GOVERNMENT

DIVISION OF PUBLIC WORKS

Department of Highway & Facility Maintenance

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News Release

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Frederick County Highway Operations Prepares for Winter

Crews are trained and skilled in snow removal

FREDERICK, MD – With unseasonably cold temperatures in Frederick County, the Division of Public Works (DPW), Office of Highway Operations, is prepared to help keep roads cleared should a winter storm affect the area. The top priority is keeping drivers safe and maintaining accessibility to Frederick County’s 2,638 miles (1,319 miles centerline) of roadway.

Winter Preparation

Highway Operations staff began winter preparations in October by hosting the annual “Snow Roadeo” event. This training event helped the drivers sharpen their skills and prepared them for the challenges of winter operations.

Staff are prepared to use more than 90 pieces of snow and ice equipment, including snowplows, for use in snow removal across the county this season. Approximately, 24,000 tons of salt has been stockpiled throughout the county, ready to be spread on winter roads for increased traction and safety. DPW also has 67,000 gallons of salt brine stored with 14 vehicles equipped to spray liquid salt brine on the roads prior to a projected forecast. The salt brine is a water solution of 23% salt that is produced in-house at a substantial cost savings. If the projected forecast outlines specific conditions, the brine will be sprayed before the storm and will help to reduce how quickly the precipitation forms and sticks to the road.

Stormwater maintenance is also an essential element of winter preparations. Crews keep roadside drainage and culverts clear of debris to help minimize ponding. This enhances safety and helps to maintain road integrity, as well as keeping pollutants out of the waterways.

Highway Operations has approximately 102 permanent road maintenance staff and routinely has open job positions for permanent highway workers or technicians to help keep winter roads clear, including snowplow and anti-icing operations and assisting in highway emergency responses. As storms move in, maintenance personnel closely monitor professional meteorological forecasts detailing wind, rain, snow, ice and other weather on county roads.

(more)

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During major winter storms, Highway Operations staff also work tirelessly with contractors to keep the extensive infrastructure system well maintained around the clock. Frederick County currently works with 16 contractors with 43 pieces of snow removal equipment and various larger equipment on standby.

Winter Driving Safety

On average, more than 200,000 crashes occur statewide every year due to unsafe driving in snow, ice and other wet conditions, such as driving too fast, following too closely, or failing to maintain a lane and overcorrecting. In winter weather, motorists are reminded to drive slowly for conditions and leave space between their vehicle and others. Wearing a seat belt and focusing on the road are a few other important driving tips for any type of weather.

For more information on weather-related crashes and statistics, visit the U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration website at www.tinyurl.com/WeatherEvents.

Winter Driving Tips

- Remove snow and ice from all vehicle windows, mirrors and lights prior to driving.
- Only travel in winter weather when absolutely necessary, and leave early to provide enough time to safely reach the destination.
- Slow down on winter roads -- speed limits are based on road and weather conditions.
- Keep a safe distance from other vehicles.
- Watch carefully for snow removal equipment.
- Use extra caution on bridges and ramps, as they may be icy.

Before traveling in winter weather, check tires, brakes, lights, battery, wipers, defroster, heater and vehicle fluid levels. Carry a vehicle emergency kit with such items as tire chains, flashlight, batteries, ice scraper, snow shovel, first aid supplies, extra clothes/gloves, blanket, flares, non-perishable food/water and jumper cables.

Before traveling, citizens are encouraged to visit the Highway Operations webpage to get updated information on road closures (www.FrederickCountyMD.gov/roadsclosed) and other pertinent information.

For more information about winter preparation, contact [Highway Operations](#) at 301-600-1564 or via e-mail at OHighOpsEmail@FrederickCountyMD.gov, or visit www.FrederickCountyMD.gov/snow.

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