



FREDERICK COUNTY GOVERNMENT

DIVISION OF PUBLIC WORKS

Department of Highway & Facility Maintenance

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News Release

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Office of Highway Operations Prepared for Winter Conditions

Frederick County, Maryland – As the COVID-19 pandemic persists, the Division of Public Works' (DPW) Office of Highway Operations (OHO) has been planning how staff will manage winter operations, comply with social distancing requirements, and ensure the service level that citizens expect from Frederick County. Whenever possible, OHO will implement operational changes to meet current COVID-19 protocols. So that it may operate safely, however, some modifications to past practices and exemptions to the County's current COVID protocols shall be necessary. OHO is prepared to keep roads cleared, but it may take longer to treat all roads to the standards of past years. Our top priorities are drivers' safety and accessibility to Frederick County's 2,652 miles (1,326 miles centerline) of roadway.

Winter Preparation

OHO's winter preparations began in October with its annual Snow Road-eo training that sharpens equipment operators' skills and prepares them for the challenges of inclement weather. OHO is ready to treat County roads with its 95 pieces of snow and ice equipment, a stockpile of 24,000 tons of salt, and the 79,000 gallons of liquid salt brine that OHO produced in-house at a substantial cost savings. Salt brine is a water solution of 23% salt that OHO sprays pre-storm, if conditions warrant. It prevents snow from bonding to pavement, reduces the overall amount of material needed to treat County roads, and aids overall snow removal operations.

Storm water maintenance is also a key component of OHO's winter preparations. Clearing debris from roadside drainage and culverts keeps pollutants out of waterways and minimizes ponding, which enhances safety and prolongs road integrity.

OHO has approximately 102 permanent road maintenance staff who clear winter roads. As storms approach, they closely monitor professional meteorological forecasts. During major winter storms, 16 contractors, with 43 pieces of snow removal equipment and

various types of larger equipment on standby, assist OHO staff in around-the-clock maintenance of the County's extensive roadway infrastructure.

Winter Driving Safety

On average, more than 200,000 crashes occur statewide every year due to unsafe driving – moving too fast for conditions, following too closely, or failing to maintain a lane and overcorrecting – in inclement weather. Winter weather conditions require motorists to drive more slowly and allow extra space between their vehicle and others'. Of course, under any type of weather conditions, wearing a seat belt and focusing on the road are crucial.

Winter Driving Tips

- ✓ Remove snow and ice from the vehicle's roof, windows, mirrors, and lights prior to driving
- ✓ Only travel in winter weather when it is essential, and leave early to provide adequate time to safely reach your destination
- ✓ Slow down on winter roads: speed limits are based on dry pavement and clear weather
- ✓ Maintain 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, check tires, brakes, lights, battery, wipers, defroster, heater, vehicle fluid levels
- ✓ When traveling, take tire chains, flashlight, ice scraper, snow shovel, first-aid supplies, extra clothes/gloves, blanket, flares, non-perishable food/water, jumper cables

Frederick County citizens and motorists are encouraged to visit www.frederickcountymd.gov for updated information on road closures and other pertinent information before traveling. Visit U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration, https://ops.fhwa.dot.gov/weather/q1_roadimpact.htm, for more information on weather-related crash statistics