



FREDERICK COUNTY GOVERNMENT

DIVISION OF PUBLIC WORKS
Department of Highway & Facility Maintenance

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News Release

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Department of Highway Operations Prepared for Winter Conditions

Frederick County, Maryland – As the COVID-19 pandemic persists, the Division of Public Works' (DPW) Department of Highway Operations (DOHO) 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. DOHO is prepared to keep roads cleared, but it may take longer to treat all roads to the standards of past years. The department is seeing a shortage of about 20% of staff due to the nationwide truck driver shortage. Our top priorities are drivers' safety and accessibility to Frederick County's 2,657 miles (1,328 miles centerline) of roadway.

Winter Preparation

DOHO'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. DOHO is ready to treat County roads with its 91 pieces of snow and ice equipment, a stockpile of 24,000 tons of salt, and the 67,000 gallons of liquid salt brine that DOHO produces in-house at a substantial cost savings. Salt brine is a water solution of 23% salt that is sprayed before a 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 DOHO'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.

DOHO has approximately 100 permanent road maintenance staff who clear winter roads. As storms approach, they closely monitor professional meteorological forecasts. During major winter storms, 22 contractors, with 67 pieces of snow removal equipment and various types of larger equipment are on standby, ready to assist DOHO staff in around-the-clock maintenance of the County's extensive roadway infrastructure.

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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'. 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 a 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 resident and motorists are encouraged to visit www.frederickcountymd.gov/roadsclosed 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/index.asp>, for more information on weather-road.

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