



Okanogan County

Dept. of Public Works

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PRESS RELEASE

OKANOGAN COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

WINTER DRIVING CONDITIONS

The winter driving season has arrived and the following items are intended to be reminders to the traveling public.

The County consists of 6 road maintenance districts. With 1,371 miles of roadway, it averages out to about 229 miles per area. Depending upon snow depth, it may take several days to get the roads all plowed and sanded, per storm event.

The Arterial Roads and School Bus Routes are the main focus of our Winter Maintenance Activities, they will be the first to be plowed and sanded. The mail routes, access roads, and the primitive roads are completed next. Depending on the depth of snow or if it happens on a weekend, some of the more rural roads may not be cleared until the crews return to work the following week.

In extreme/severe weather, even regularly maintained County roads can become impassible. You may need four wheel drive with chains to travel during these times, which could last for several days. You should also carry a shovel, blanket, food/water, flashlight, cell phone and extra warm clothing for changing conditions, in case you get stranded. It may take several hours before anyone can get to you to plow you out, depending upon the location and availability of snow removal equipment, weather and wind conditions at that time.

Do your part for Winter Safety by clearing all glass, install traction tires, add some weight in your vehicle (sandbags, etc) to help with traction, **slow down and pay attention to the road conditions**, (i.e. compact snow, ice or slush) watch out for others and drive defensively. Speed is a major cause of accidents in the winter. Slowing down and paying attention may help you stay out of an unexpected vehicle collision.

When you come up behind a snowplow or sander working, don't get too close. Stay back at least 200 feet. Even while plowing, the driver may turn on his sander at anytime to help with traction or hit an icy spot. The flashing lights are a warning to use caution, so please slow down and stay far enough back, so you are not hit by the sand or are causing the driver problems with his plow work.

When meeting snowplows/sanders – please slow down, make sure to stay on your own side of the road and give them enough room to do their work.

While plowing private driveways, please **do not** push the snow across, or leave piles of snow in the County road, it leaves bumps/wrinkles in the road that can cause accidents.