



COUNTY OF TRINITY DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

SNOW REMOVAL POLICY #2010-01

Fall 2009

Overview

Snow is a mixed blessing in that it provides residents and visitors to the county with opportunities for winter sports and beautiful scenic views. Unfortunately Snow also is very costly in terms of snow removal for our county roads. The snow removal services are provided by county staff comprised of both permanent and retired (extra help) employees. It is important to note that only county roads and facilities are plowed. We do not offer plowing on private roads, state highways or on roads that are not winner maintained.

The goal of the Trinity County Road Department is to remove snow from the county roads safely and quickly considering the availability of labor, equipment and funding, the severity of the storm, and how low in elevation the snow is falling. While it is our desire to keep roads free of snow and ice at all times and in all situations, the loss and limitations of funding and personnel do not allow for this anymore. In order to meet needs with the remaining resources, the following is enacted;

Normal Snow Removal Operations

Snow removal on county roads will take place between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. weekdays only after there is an accumulation of more than **three (3)** inches of accumulated snow prior to 3:00 p.m. Snow accumulation after hours may necessitate the use of traction devices by the road users. During snowstorms, residents should carry appropriate traction devices and avoid traveling rural county roadways after 5:00 p.m.

During a storm, main roads and school bus routes have priority over other roads. Each piece of snow removal equipment has an assigned route based on this priority. The operators will start at the beginning of their assigned area and plow until they reach the end of that area and then will start back at the beginning of Priority 1 & 2 roads. Complete clearing of Priority 3 roads will not take place until after Priority 1 & 2 roadways remain clear. Priority 3 roads will not be plowed on the weekend.

- Priority 1 - Roads with a functional classification of major collector and arterial and/or emergency request from the Sheriff Dispatch.
- Priority 2 - Roads with a functional classification of minor collector, bus routes and public spaces.
- Priority 3 - All other roads normally given snow and ice control.

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Unless otherwise assigned, equipment and personnel will perform snow removal first on priority 1 roads on a county-wide basis. Priority 1 roads will be kept passable to properly equipped vehicles. As conditions and time permit, plowing of priority 2 roads will follow, and so on until all roads normally plowed can be used by properly equipped vehicles.

Snow removal equipment and personnel will be stationed at Weaverville, Hayfork, Hawkins Bar, and Ruth during this time. Only regular full time Staff will be available to plow roadways. Staff is authorized to work overtime to keep Priority 1 roadways open and to keep Priority 2 bus routes open for morning operations.

Snow Emergency Events

Should it appear that Staff will not be able to clear all Priority 1 & 2 roadways in a single day or all roads within two days, a Snow Emergency will be declared by the County Chief Executive Officer, Road Commissioner, or Road Superintendent. It is hard to predict exactly what will cause a need for a snow emergency to be declared in advance, but in general when it is predicted to snow below 2,000' more than 12" below 2,500' or more than two days.

Snow removal on county roads will take place between the hours of 6:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. all week including weekends. Snow accumulation may necessitate the use of traction devices by the road users. During snowstorms, residents shall carry appropriate traction devices and avoid traveling rural county roadways after 3:00 p.m.

Snow removal equipment and personnel will be stationed at Trinity Center, Weaverville, Lewiston, Hayfork, Hawkins Bar, Ruth and Zenia during this time. Both regular full time and extra help Staff will be available to plow roadways. Staff is authorized to work overtime to keep Priority 1 and 2 roadways open if possible. Limited service will be provided to Priority 3 roadways during extended working hours and when time permits. Again, Priority 3 roadways are plowed only during working hours.

Important Information

- Caltrans removes snow on Highways 3, 36 and 299. Call Caltrans at 1-800-427-7623 for current road conditions on State Highways.
- County employees are not permitted to plow private roads and non-county road entrances.
- No sanding will take place during plowing operations. Sanding will only happen at locations with steep hills and/or sharp curves after the storm.
- Clearing driveway culverts is the responsibility of the property owner. County employees will only clear culverts for public roadways.
- County employees will respond immediately to all legitimate emergencies (must be dispatched by Sheriff's Dispatcher), but the individual or agency may be billed for Transportation Department assistance that is outside our normal winter maintenance obligations or responsibilities.
- Office Staff is not able to determine when a particular road is going to be plowed.

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WHAT YOU CAN DO:

A) Please be courteous to our drivers. Driving a plow is hard work and requires a lot of skill and concentration and it can be nerve racking and very tiring. A driver never intentionally moves snow to block a driveway or car, sometimes it is simply the path the snow moves when it is being plowed. Unfortunately many times a driver will return to the Corporation Yard and talk about people that yelled at them, made gestures at them, throw things at the truck and sometime even threaten them. Be kind to them, they are only trying to help as many people as they can as fast as they can.

B) Plan ahead, be prepared, and don't travel if you don't have to. Carry a survival kit consisting of blanket(s) or sleeping bag, water, and a flashlight in case of vehicle breakdown or becoming stuck in the snow. Do not leave the vehicle. If you must travel, leave earlier so you are not rushed to an appointment which will allow you to drive at a slower safer speed.

C) Please caution your children not to play in the streets or on the snow berms, this is very dangerous. Explain to your children that drivers may not see them or be able to stop in time to avoid hitting them.

D) Make sure that your snow tires are in good condition. To be legal SNOW TIRES must have a minimum of 6/32 inch (3/16") of tread. Refer to Section 27465 of the Motor Vehicle Code. Check your tires for your safety as this is about 1/2 of new tread depth on many tires, and is approximately twice the minimum depth for street legal tires. Your tires may be legal in dry conditions, but no longer qualify as snow tires.

E) Always carry approved traction devices (chains/cables) and learn how to install them. Practice installing them a few times in dry weather.

F) It is not uncommon for a rural County road to become impassable for several days during major storm events. If you do not have more than one route to get to and from your residence during winter months, then you should store enough food, water, fuel for a generator if you have one and other provisions to last at least 7 days.

WHAT YOU SHOULD NOT DO:

A) Do not park vehicles or place your trash cans on roadways or along the edge of roadways. Vehicles blocking snow removal operations may be towed away at owner's expense. Park or place trash cans a minimum of five (5) feet off the roadway on your property.

B) Do not clear your driveway until after your road has been plowed. This will reduce the amount of snow that the plow leaves as it passes your driveway.

C) Do not shovel or put snow from driveways in the roadway as this creates a hazard for other drivers, a liability for you, and is illegal.

D) Do not allow children and pets to play on roadways.

E) Snow plows make frequent stops and backup maneuvers, do not drive your car up behind a snow plow as the driver may be unable to see you and inadvertently back into your car. If you are behind a plow that stops, stop your vehicle in such a way that your car looks into the driver's outside rearview mirror and please give them extra room.

F) Park in County lots as an alternative parking spot during a snow storms.

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Thank you for your cooperation, and let's have another safe winter. Please remember, we need your help.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Why, when I have just finished shoveling my driveway, did the snowplow come by and leave a large berm of snow in front of it?

A: The plow operators are unable to turn the blades to avoid leaving a berm all along the plow route, regardless of driveways.

Q: I want to know if my road is on a bus route and it is going to get plowed sooner. Who do I call.?

A: We don't have an answer for that question. Bus routes are changed and if you are on a local street, but the bus route is on your street, you're fortunate for now. Keep in mind that it can change and we have no knowledge or control over the routes.

Q: Arterial, Collector, Minor or Major?? What the heck? I just want to know when my street is going to be plowed.

A: Take a look at the attached maps for priority roads. The county roads that connect areas such as Ruth, Zenia, Wildwood or Lewiston to State Highways are going to be the first, then come roads that have less traffic, and connect areas such as Ruth to Zenia or Denny will be next. Last will come all the roads that serve the outlying areas or are side streets or roadways.

Q: I live on Forest Avenue in Hayfork. It has been snowing hard for the last two days, but my street has not been plowed. Did we get missed?

A: No, unfortunately we are limited on resources and can only plow the Priority 1 & 2 roadways. If time allows, we will plow the Priority 3 roads, but that might not always be the case. Please give the crews 24 hours after the snow stops before calling the office. We don't know when it will be plowed, but we can take a report and make the drivers aware it might have been missed.

Q: The storm is over and everyone has their driveway cleared. Why, then, does the plow continue to push more snow from the shoulders back into the driveways?

A: Between storms the snowplows have to continue to push the snow back to make room for accumulations from subsequent storms. Otherwise, the travel lanes will become dangerously narrow.

Q: I have a dentist appointment in the morning. Could you please have my road plowed so I can leave home at 9 a.m.?

A: Roads will be plowed in the order that affords the greatest benefit for the most residents. This means major roads and school bus routes will be plowed first. We will plow your residential street if you have a **legitimate emergency** (threat to life, health or property). Otherwise, be flexible in regards to your appointments.

Q: I'm expecting guests. Would it be all right if they parked on the street just this once?

A: Parking is not permitted in the County Road right-of-way during snow removal operations. If you do not have adequate on-site parking that is well out of the way of snow clearing activities,

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consider carpooling or shuttling your guests in from a public parking lot. Vehicles left on the road will be towed at owner's expense.

Q: I love the way the road looks after a storm, it's a winter wonderland. Could you leave my road off your snow clearing program?

A: We agree that it does look pretty at first and less work would be great, but after a road has been traveled on, the ruts freeze and the road becomes very hazardous to navigate.

Q: The road is icy and is not one of the main roads that you sand. I don't want to put chains on for the short distance I need to travel. How can you help me?

A: You are responsible for maintaining traction on the roads, whether it's by installing chains or other means, as well as by driving slowly. We can sand only a limited number of roads, and even then the drivers are responsible for their own safety.