

# Winter Maintenance and Road Safety Tips

*Slow down. It's winter.*





# When will my road get plowed?

## Plowing Priorities

1	100-Series highways, and other high traffic roads	Cleared within 8 hours after snow stops
2	Secondary routes, trunk highways and other medium to high volume roads	Cleared within 12 hours after snow stops
3	Local paved roads, most subdivisions and residential streets	Cleared within 24 hours after snow stops
4	Gravel roads	Cleared within 24 hours after snow stops

We are on the job day and night, 24/7, keeping our roads as clear and safe as possible. Road clearing and salting is scheduled according to the kind of road and traffic levels.

# Salting and Sanding

100-Series highways, and other high traffic roads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Salted to achieve bare pavement within 8 to 12 hours</li><li>• Salt applied before, during and after a storm if required</li></ul>
Secondary routes, trunk highways and other medium to high volume roads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Salted to achieve a 2.5-metre to 5-metre bare strip along centre line within 12 hours</li><li>• Salt applied at beginning of storm and after a storm if required</li></ul>
Local paved roads, most subdivisions and residential streets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Salted to achieve a 1-metre to 2.5-metre bare strip within 24 hours</li><li>• Salt applied only after a storm</li></ul>
Gravel roads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Snow packed within 24 hours</li><li>• Sanding as needed</li></ul>

*We also use sand instead of salt in environmentally sensitive areas and when temperatures are too cold for salt to work,  $-10^{\circ}$  Celsius.*

## Emergencies

Call 911 for medical and other emergencies. We clear roads for emergency vehicles at the request of emergency services providers.

## Delays in service

We have more than 500 vehicles servicing roads throughout the province. During storms, most of our equipment is focused on keeping major highways passable. This may delay service to other roads.



# Safe Winter Driving

## Remember

- **If possible, stay home during a storm.**
- **If you must drive, check highway conditions by calling 511. Check local road conditions by calling 1-888-432-3233.**
- Note that major highways are cleared first during a storm and salted more frequently than other roads.
- Watch out for ice. Black ice can form when warm air meets an ice-cold road, especially on bridges, overpasses and in shaded areas, creating an invisible sheet of ice. Remember, road salt is not effective below  $-10^{\circ}\text{C}$ .
- Slow down when roads are wet, slushy or snow-covered. If traffic is backing up behind you, pull over and let others pass.
- Follow at a safe distance. Stopping on snow and ice can take up to 12 times further than stopping on dry pavement.
- Never pass a snowplow when it is clearing snow from the road. Whiteout conditions are often created in the front of the plow. This reduces visibility and increases the chance of a collision.

# Winter Safety Tips

## Your vehicle

Keep your vehicle in top working order and ensure it's equipped with proper winter tires that are in good condition.

## Shoveling

Shovel snow in the opposite direction of snowplows. Snow across the roadway presents a possible hazard to all traffic and could cause an accident as vehicles try to avoid the obstruction.

## Children

Children should not play in the snow along the side of the road or anywhere a snowplow is likely to operate.

## Survival kit checklist

Keep a winter survival kit in your vehicle, with supplies such as:

- blanket
- flash light + batteries
- matches
- food pack with chocolate, nuts or dried fruit
- extra clothing
- deep can to melt snow or hold a candle
- plastic garbage bag to provide a vapour barrier over clothing
- flash flag that can be tied to the aerial

*Highway safety is a partnership.  
We do everything possible to clear  
and de-ice roads, but drivers have  
a responsibility to adjust their  
speed according to conditions.*



# Snowplow Safety

*During storms or in windy conditions, visibility can be reduced. While our plow drivers take as much care as possible, there are a number of things residents can do to ensure efficient and safe snow removal.*

## Playing in Roadside Snow Banks can be Deadly!

Teach your children about winter safety. Teach them not to play on roadside snow banks or anywhere a snowplow is likely to operate.

Our snowplow operators visit schools to teach children about winter safety using Sammy Snowplow materials.

Click [www.sammysnowplow.ca](http://www.sammysnowplow.ca) to meet Sammy Snowplow, watch the videos, and download a children's workbook.



## Roadside Restrictions

### Winter parking bans

Most communities have parking bans during the winter months, allowing snowplows to clear roads more quickly and safely. Parking on the street is prohibited from 1 am to 7 am. Parking bans are also in effect from one hour after the start of a snowstorm to two hours after the storm has stopped.

Ignoring winter parking bans could mean:

- a fine
- a towed vehicle
- a damaged vehicle:

Our snowplow operators drive with care, but they may not see your vehicle during white-out conditions.

### Mailboxes

Place your mailbox far enough back from the road to allow snowplows to pass safely during regular plowing and when clearing snow banks from the shoulder of the road. Mailboxes should also be placed high enough off the ground to be seen in deep snow and above high snow banks.

### Composters

Take care where you leave your compost container. Store it well off the road and shoulder most of the time. On compost pick-up days, be sure to allow enough room for snowplows to pass. A tandem truck with a front plow and a side wing is 4.9 metres wide—that's 16 feet!

We are not responsible for mailboxes or composters damaged during routine snow clearing.

### Pulpwood and logs

Never pile pulpwood and logs on the shoulder of the road. This is both illegal and dangerous, and can damage snow removal equipment.



# Balancing Safety and the Environment

*We work to balance the need for safe highways with the need to protect the environment in three key ways:*

**1**

## **Sand and Salt**

Salt is the most effective and affordable anti-icing agent. We use about 240,000 tonnes of road salt each winter to keep our highways and roads safe.

We use a sand & salt mixture instead of salt alone in some areas:

- near wells and ground water supplies to protect the water
- in environmentally sensitive areas
- on bridges, because it is less corrosive
- on gravel roads where it gives better traction



## 2

## Equipment

We use equipment that helps us apply salt with less waste:

- salt rate application controls are installed on all salting units
- newer units have self-regulating controls
- new units can apply a salt brine mixture, which improves the effectiveness of the salt. The salt brine adheres to the road surface and starts working immediately. More salt sticks to the road where it is needed and does not bounce into the roadside vegetation.

*We provide the highest possible level of service and safety in the most environmentally responsible way.*

## 3

## Weather

We use weather data to help us apply salt only when and where it is needed:

- We use an electronic road weather information system that gives us real-time information from about 40 sites around the province, including roadway and atmospheric conditions. A forecaster uses this data to give pavement and site-specific forecasts to front-line staff. Accurate and timely data helps us to apply salt when and where it can help to create safer driving conditions.
- About 250 units are equipped with GPS technology that tracks the location and operation of the snow and ice control equipment.



# Check Highway Conditions

## Checking is Easy

### By phone

Call 511 to hear about road conditions on highways in Nova Scotia

- Enter a highway number to hear up-to-the-minute information about that road
- Information is updated at 8 am, 1 pm, and 4 pm each day and whenever road conditions change significantly
- Listen in English or French

### By smartphone

Visit [m511.gov.ns.ca](http://m511.gov.ns.ca) to access 511 information on your smartphone

### By internet

[www.gov.ns.ca/tran/cameras/](http://www.gov.ns.ca/tran/cameras/)

- View current images from over 40 highway cameras around the province.



**Remember that using hand-held phones while driving is against the law.**





  
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Transportation and  
Infrastructure Renewal