

WASHTENAW COUNTY ROAD COMMISSION

2020-2021 WINTER MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES

It is the Road Commission's objective to achieve traversable roadways with its winter maintenance operations with the effective use of available resources. To that end, the Director of Operations, by position, is empowered to make necessary, prudent decisions in the disposition of resources to maximize winter maintenance service delivery in fulfillment of the Road Commission statutory mission. Winter maintenance operations shall be carried out with normally performed maintenance methods as required based upon a number of factors such as, but not limited to road conditions, weather forecasts, nature and type of storm event, and time and duration of storm event. Generally, winter maintenance operations will begin when slippery conditions exist or snow levels reach about two inches on most major roads. If snow continues to fall or is predicted, crews will be mobilized to respond accordingly.

In addition to its county road system, the Washtenaw County Road Commission maintains state trunklines located outside incorporated cities and villages under contract by the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT). Winter maintenance services for state trunklines shall be performed in accordance with MDOT guidelines and/or directions set forth by MDOT district maintenance personnel. MDOT has established a priority level for all MDOT state trunklines within Washtenaw County.

Normal winter maintenance hours of operation are Monday through Friday, 7:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. A night patrol crew will begin late November and continue through approximately mid-March. The night patrol crew consists of four personnel that are on duty from 8:00 p.m. until 4:30 a.m., five days a week, and responds to ice and snow conditions on MDOT state trunklines. This crew is funded in total by MDOT. In isolated cases, the night patrol crew can perform winter maintenance on county roads, at the Road Commission's expense.

Winter maintenance operations shall be conducted in accordance with the established priority system based on traffic volumes, road classification, and location. The winter maintenance priorities are as follows:

Priority 1 (Paved County Roads and I-94, US-23, M-14, US-12 between I-94 & M-52)

Provide maintenance service as appropriate under prevailing weather conditions, with a goal of providing a pavement surface over its entire width generally bare of ice and snow. This work may be accomplished using overtime as necessary. Winter maintenance crews shall scrape snow and ice from the roadway surface and apply deicing chemicals and/or abrasives as needed to provide a wet and reasonably bare pavement. Clearing the pavement bare of ice and snow over its entire width will be a continuous process during and after the snow event using overtime as necessary.

Priority 2 (M-52, M-153, M-17, BR-12, US-12 between I-94 & Wayne County)

Provide maintenance service as appropriate under prevailing weather conditions, with a goal of providing a pavement surface generally bare of ice and snow in the center portion with sufficient width for one-wheel track in each direction. Winter maintenance crews shall scrape and apply deicing chemicals and/or abrasives as needed. This work may be accomplished using overtime as necessary during a winter storm event. Clearing the pavement bare of ice and snow over its entire width will be accomplished as soon as reasonably possible after the winter storm event, without working overtime.

Priority 3 (Subdivision Roads)

Winter maintenance services shall be provided as appropriate under prevailing weather conditions with a goal of providing a pavement surface that is one plow truck pass wide in each direction of travel, with a thin cover of snow permissible. This work will be accomplished as soon as reasonably possible after the completion of Priority 1 and the initial goal of Priority 2. Under extreme packed ice conditions, application of deicing chemicals and/or abrasives may be utilized in an emergency on hills, curves, and intersections only with the authorization of the Superintendent of Maintenance, with the concurrence of the Director of Operations.

Clearing the pavement surface of snow and ice from each side of the roadway centerline with a thin cover of snow permissible shall be accomplished as soon as reasonably possible, using overtime as necessary.

Snow and ice may be scraped and plowed during periods of thaw or melt at catch basin or other primary drainage outlet locations to provide reasonable drainage, using overtime as necessary.

Priority 4 (Gravel Roads)

Winter maintenance services shall be provided as appropriate under prevailing weather conditions with a goal of providing a gravel surface that is one plow truck pass wide in each direction of travel. This work will be accomplished as soon as reasonably possible after the completion of Priority 1 and the initial goal of Priority 2. Winter maintenance crews shall scrape and plow snow from the traveled portion of the roadway leaving a thin cover of snow. Under extreme packed ice conditions, application of abrasives may be utilized in an emergency on hills, curves, and intersections only with the authorization of the Superintendent of Maintenance, with the concurrence of the Director of Operations.

Clearing the gravel surface of snow and ice over the entire width of the roadway shall be accomplished as soon as reasonably possible, using overtime as necessary.

Crews normally assigned to winter maintenance operations on state trunklines may be used on county roads after Priority 1 and 2 have been completed.

If a storm is long lasting or a second storm starts before Priority 3 and 4 routes have been completed, crews will return to Priority 1 and 2 routes.

The Director of Operations may authorize overtime for Shop and Buildings & Grounds personnel as necessary in support of winter maintenance operations.

The Director of Operations shall present these guidelines at the annual meeting of the Snow Emergency Council held at the Washtenaw County Emergency Operations Center in late October/early November. The Snow Emergency Council is comprised of concerned public service agencies operating within Washtenaw County. These include, but are not limited to, Road Commission, MDOT and municipal street departments, news media, school districts, fire and police departments, and the Washtenaw County Sheriff's Office Emergency Services Division. The purpose of establishing the Council is to coordinate emergency response of public service agencies when winter weather may threaten the health and safety of the public. The expeditious movement of traffic and the safety of citizens being the primary purpose of the Council, it is the intent of the Council to not only handle the clearance of streets and highways, and the responsibility to respond to emergency requests for services, but to provide coordinated public information on the condition of local streets and highways.