

## **Media Advisory – Dec. 22, 2008**

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### **County road crews plow 50,000-plus miles**

Since Saturday, Dec. 13, Snohomish County road crews have worked nonstop to clear more than 50,000 miles of road lanes inundated repeatedly with snow.

Crews have been working split 12-hour shifts during the nine days since the storm began, covering more than 3,600 public road lane miles within Snohomish County. Those lanes have been plowed over with each new snow and ice fall, removing snow incrementally to near bare pavement conditions, only to have another wave of snow follow and accumulate again.

Road crews also have spread a daily average of 800 tons of sand throughout the county, totaling approximately 7,000 tons of sand. These efforts, combined with plowing, have kept primary county roads and some secondary roads open with few – and short-lived – road closures.

“Keeping roads clear and safe is Snohomish County’s top priority right now,” County Executive Aaron Reardon said. “The dedication and hard work of these men and women, and in such frigid temperatures, is a testament to the fact that government makes a positive difference.”

About 30 plow/sander trucks and five graders have been dispersed to the field since snowfalls began more than one week ago, and more than 160 employees have been pulling 12-hour shifts since then. With more snow on the horizon, crews are preparing to work nonstop through the Christmas holiday.

“The men and women on these crews are holding up well despite the difficult conditions,” said Steve Thomsen, the county’s public works director. “The equipment also is handling well thanks to folks in fleet management.”

Finding a spot to clear snow is becoming difficult as piles are topping more than 5 feet in some areas. Reported drifts of 8 feet in east Snohomish County also have added unique challenges to plowing.

For residents, the basic message is the same: Be patient while work crews do their job. Stalled and stuck vehicles make it harder for plow trucks to clear snow safely.

“If you don’t need to be on the road, stay home,” said John Pennington, the county’s director of emergency management. “Weather conditions continue to change and that makes for very unsafe driving conditions right now.”

If you must drive, follow these basic tips:

- Have your car winterized and make sure it is working properly.
- Install good winter tires.
- Keep a shovel, windshield scraper and blankets inside your vehicle.
- Maintain at least a half tank of gas at all times.
- Check road conditions before departing.
- Let others know of your route and your estimated time of arrival.
- Allow extra time and extra distance between vehicles.

For more winter-weather tips and updates, go to:

[www.snoco.org/Departments/Emergency\\_Management/Information/Factsheets](http://www.snoco.org/Departments/Emergency_Management/Information/Factsheets)

[www.snopud.com/?p=2214](http://www.snopud.com/?p=2214)

[www.redcross.org/article/0,1072,0\\_312\\_8520,00.html](http://www.redcross.org/article/0,1072,0_312_8520,00.html)

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