



Snohomish County

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County Executive

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County crews stay ahead of snow, prepare for warmer weather

Snohomish County road crews stayed ahead of the worst weather this week by continually clearing snow-covered streets following advance preparations made last fall.

Each fall, Snohomish County's Road Maintenance Division inspects and preps trucks for potential snowstorms. The county also stockpiles sand, which it uses to de-ice roadways. The result is a quicker-than-normal clearing schedule that allows the county to maintain main arterials while also getting to secondary streets and eventually residential neighborhoods.

"We've been through this before and we know what preparations to take for inclement weather such as this week's snowstorm," said Snohomish County Aaron Reardon. "Departments have been working together to prepare for the snow and that work is evident."

The county's Public Works Department, which houses Road Maintenance, coordinates with the county's Emergency Management Department, which tracks weather patterns such as snow and rain. That allows better staging of Public Works' trucks and crews in the parts of Snohomish County that will get hit the hardest.

"The advance preparation and the joint effort helps us be more efficient and effective when the time for response comes," said John Pennington, director of the county's Emergency Management Department. "This isn't just one department's job, it's all of us as whole."

Since Saturday, about 40 trucks — plows and graders — have cleared about 10,000 miles of roadway lanes, using as much as 3,300 tons of sand. With snow tapering off, streets will stay clear longer and allow county crews to increase plowing and grading on secondary and residential streets.

"We must maintain arterials first for public safety, but from there we focus on secondary and residential streets," said Steve Thomsen, the county's Public Works director. "As the snow has come in multiple events, we've had to re-clear many main roads over again."

With warmer temperatures ahead, Snohomish County will see an increased snowmelt through the weekend. The potential for flooding is more likely in urban areas than rural due to clogged storm drains.

While county crews diligently cleared drains in the fall, residents shoveling snow from driveways and sidewalks are encouraged to take a second look at storm drains, clearing them of snow and debris. Catch basins and storm drains often get clogged with leaves and debris following snow events. The result can be flooding, or if temperatures drop again dangerous ice slicks.

Homeowners of flat-topped structures — especially mobile homes, car ports and boat marinas — should take steps to safely remove snow and standing water from their roofs. The combination of snow and water increases the chance for a collapsed roof.

County crews will continue to clear roads through the week, as well as continue removing downed trees from roads while also clearing debris from drains.

Road issues can be reported by calling 425-388-7500 or emailing contact.pwrm@snoco.org.

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