

Public Works Response to Winter Weather

When a winter storm is forecast for the area, Boone County Public Works will have employees and equipment staged and ready to begin clearing the 800 + miles of county roads. For a major snow/ice event, all 40 drivers are scheduled to work 12-hour shifts around the clock. Equipment available for snow removal includes: 16 dump trucks, 5 one-ton trucks, and 8 graders. The overall effectiveness of the snow removal effort is enhanced by an organized, consistent approach to the task. To help the public better understand what can be expected from the County Public Works Department during snow events, we'd like to share some information about our process.

Priority Routes and Emergency Responses - During the initial phase of a major snow event, nearly all resources will be dedicated to keeping priority roads (paved surface roads that serve critical facilities and provide access between state highways and communities) open.

At any time during a snow event, the need to provide assistance to emergency vehicles is given top priority. Emergency calls should be made to Joint Communications by dialing 911.

Gravel Roads

Gravel roads are primarily cleared by the graders, which operate during daylight hours. Once snow has stopped, it takes approximately 3 complete 12-hour shifts to make a pass over all gravel roads.

Subdivisions

Subdivisions will often have the main streets cleared by our large dump trucks with follow-up on the side streets and cul-de-sacs done by the one-ton trucks. One common problem in clearing subdivisions is vehicles parked on the street. If County vehicles are unable to maneuver around parked or abandoned vehicles the section of the subdivision must be skipped until vehicles are moved.

Cul-de-sacs and dead-end streets

Although cul-de-sacs are often sought out by home buyers for their low traffic volume, these streets are at a clear disadvantage during winter snow removal. Snow plow drivers are faced with the problem of maneuverability within in the cul-de-sac as well as very limited options for depositing the extra snow. In addition, it's the higher volume and connecting streets that must be prioritized due to the greater number of people affected. It is our goal to get all roads open and that includes cul-de-sacs and dead-end roads, but these will typically be addressed after the higher volume roads.

Windrows and mailboxes

Windrows along the edge of the roadway are the result of snow plowing. The County does not have the resources or the manpower to clear drive approaches or mail boxes. We ask for your understanding and cooperation. If you have a neighbor who is unable to remove the snow, please assist them.

With large trucks operating around the clock, often in low visibility situations, it is inevitable that a mailbox occasionally gets hit. If a properly installed mailbox is directly hit by one of our trucks, we'll try to get it repaired-- or a temporary set up within 48 hours of reporting. The County may not repair mailboxes that were not located according to USPS guidelines for height and distance from the roadway or that fell because they were rotten or otherwise in poor condition to begin with.

Special Request

During a heavy snow event, the Department often receives special request from residents in the County. These requests are usually related to concerns about potential medical complications, the need to report to work, or a vehicle that performs poorly in the snow. Please remember that a resident can call 911 for any medical emergency and Public Works assistance will be immediately coordinated by Joint Communications when needed. As for other special requests, please understand that it is not feasible, efficient or appropriate to alter our established approach to snow removal to accommodate the special circumstances of individual residents. By working the snow event in a systematic fashion, we are able to get roads open for all residents much faster. Residents who work in safety sensitive positions and other jobs that require attendance during snow events or who own vehicles that do not get around in winter weather may need to watch weather forecast closely so that alternate arrangements can be made prior to the storm. Again, our goal is to have the roads open as quickly as possible so that all residents can get to their destinations safely and as quickly as possible.