

*Rob Houghton, P.E., Director*

REMINDERS ABOUT THE SNOW SEASON

Snow Removal Policy
December 2005

OVERVIEW

The Calaveras County Department of Public Works would like to remind the residents of the County who live in areas subject to snow accumulation about the basic snow removal policies and procedures. Snow is a mixed blessing: It provides residents and visitors to the county the opportunity for winter sports and recreational activities, but it is costly to remove the accumulated snow and keep our County-maintained roads safe. Most snow removal activities are restricted to Supervisorial Districts 2 and 3 (West Point and Ebbetts Pass areas). Snow removal services are provided on approximately 150 miles of County road. No snow removal services are performed on County-maintained roads above 5,000 feet in elevation or on unpaved roads (dirt or gravel). The snow removal is provided by County staff comprised of both permanent and extra hire employees. The State (Caltrans) provides snow removal services on the State Highways.

The County will attempt to keep all paved County Roads below 5,000-foot elevation open but severe storms sometimes result in persons being snowbound. Be prepared. Please recognize that our revenues for operations and maintenance are limited. To provide the best overall benefit to local residents and the traveling public year around, a concerted effort must be made to use our limited resources judiciously.

We will respond to all legitimate emergencies (threat to life, health or property). The Public Works offices are open Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and can be contacted at 754-6402. In the event of an emergency on weekends or evenings, please contact the Sheriff's Office at 754-6500 who will then dispatch the proper Public Works employees in the area.

✉ email the snowplow crew: snowplower@co.calaveras.ca.us



POLICY STATEMENT

The Calaveras County Department of Public Works has adopted the following policy regarding snow removal and ice sanding on County maintained roadways.

Snow Depth. Snow plowing operations start when there are four inches of snow on the roadway in the Arnold, West Point, Glencoe, Railroad Flat and Mountain Ranch areas and two inches of snow on the roadway in the Camp Connell area. (Recognize that four inches on your deck or in your yard does not necessarily mean that there are four inches on the roadway. The snow may not build up as rapidly on black pavement.)

Timing and Crowding. Once snow removal operations have begun, the County will continue to plow snow and push it back to the shoulders twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week until removal is completed and in preparation for additional storms. We must be certain that there is adequate space on the road shoulder for the new snow. During snow plow operations, a berm of snow is left in front of all driveways becoming the responsibility of the resident to clear. Unfortunately the necessity to continue to push the snow back to the shoulders of the roads after the storm is over does create additional berms that must be removed by the resident. We will attempt to complete this crowding activity as soon as possible so the creation of additional berms is kept to a minimum.

Priority. During a storm, main roads that provide access to state highways and minor collectors, as well as school bus routes have priority over other roads. Each piece of snow removal equipment has an assigned route. The operators will start at the beginning of their assigned area and plow until they reach the end of that area and then will start back at the beginning. Complete clearing of cul-de-sacs is a last priority.

WHAT CAN I DO?

1. Plan ahead, be prepared, and don't travel unless necessary. Carry a survival kit consisting of blankets or sleeping bag, water, and a flashlight in case of vehicle breakdown or becoming stuck in the snow.
2. Please caution children not to play in the streets or on the snow berms. This is very dangerous. Explain to your children that drivers may not see them or be able to stop in time to avoid hitting them.
3. Always carry chains.
4. Do not shovel or put snow from driveways in the roadway as this creates a hazard for other drivers, a liability for you, and is illegal.
5. Snow plows make frequent stops and backup maneuvers. Do not drive your car up behind a snow plow as the driver may be unable to see you and inadvertently back into your car. If you are behind a plow that stops, stop your vehicle in such a way that your car looks into the driver's outside rearview mirror and please give them extra room.

Sanding. We do not sand snow. The financial impact of maintaining a sanding and ice removal program county wide would deplete our snow removal funds prematurely. We have designated certain roads which will be sanded in order to maintain the main routes for traffic. These roads include school bus routes and major thoroughfares, such as Moran Road, Boards Crossing, Country Club, and Fairway Drive.

Ice. Ice scraping operations are done only in the daylight hours when the temperatures are sufficiently high and the snow becomes slushy. Attempts to shave ice under other circumstances have proven futile and have the effect of polishing the ice making it even more slippery.

Chains. Calaveras County Ordinance No. 2519 requires vehicles to have tire chains or traction control devices whenever necessary in order for vehicles to maintain traction while being operated on County roads. It is the driver's responsibility to insure the proper installation and maintenance of tire chains or traction control devices when necessary to prevent loss of traction. Loss of traction is defined as the inability of a vehicle to stop, turn, proceed forward or backward in a sustained, controlled manner without skidding, sliding or becoming stuck.

Parking Restrictions. Calaveras County Ordinance No. 2154 Prohibits Parking During Snow Removal Operations and reads as follows:

The parking or standing of vehicles on the right-of-way of any county road during snow removal operations conducted by or on behalf of the County is prohibited. "Snow removal operations" shall be deemed to be ongoing whenever snow is present on the right-of-way of a County road.

This law provides for all such vehicles to be towed (at the owner's expense) so as not to interfere with snow removal operations and equipment. Since the right-of-way in subdivisions is generally 50 feet on local roads and 60 to 80 feet on major roadways, vehicles that are properly parked are extremely unlikely to be damaged by snow removal operations. Since the traveled way, the ditches and the cut and fill banks are all within the right-of-way, any car parked beyond the right-of-way should be safe from damage. *The vehicle owner is responsible for the repair of any vehicle that is parked in the right-of-way and is damaged by snow removal operations.*

Garbage Cans. Garbage cans are another item frequently hit or plowed under by snow removal equipment. Cans should be placed well back from the roadway shoulder and ditch areas.

Thank you in advance for your anticipated cooperation. Let's have another safe and enjoyable winter.

PLEASE REMEMBER, WE NEED YOUR HELP!

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: *Why, when I have just finished shoveling my driveway, did the snowplow come by and leave a large berm of snow in front of it?*

A: The plow operators are unable to turn the blades to avoid leaving a berm all along the plow route, regardless of driveways.

Q: *The storm is over and everyone has their driveway cleared. Why, then, does the plow continue to push more snow from the shoulders back into the driveways?*

A: Between storms the snowplows have to continue to push the snow back to make room for accumulations from subsequent storms. Otherwise, the travel lanes will become dangerously narrow.

Q: *I have a dentist appointment in the morning. Could you please have my road plowed so I can leave home at 9 a.m.?*

A: Roads will be plowed in the order that affords the greatest benefit for the most residents. This means major roads and school bus routes will be plowed first. We will plow your residential street if you have a **legitimate emergency** (threat to life, health or property). Otherwise, be flexible in regards to your appointments.

Q: *I'm expecting guests. Would it be all right if they parked on the street just this once?*

A: Parking is not permitted in the County Road right-of-way during snow removal operations per Calaveras County Ordinance No. 2154. If you do not have adequate on-site parking that is well out of the way of snow clearing activities, consider carpooling or shuttling your guests in from a public parking lot. Vehicles left on the road will be towed at owner's expense.

Q: *I love the way the road looks after a storm, it's a winter wonderland. Could you leave my road off your snow clearing program?*

A: We agree that it does look pretty at first. But after a road has been traveled on, the ruts freeze and the road becomes very hazardous to navigate.

Q: *The road is icy and is not one of the main roads that you sand. I don't want to put chains on for the short distance I need to travel. How can you help me?*

A: You are responsible for maintaining traction on the roads, whether it's by installing chains or other means, as well as by driving slowly. We can sand only a limited number of roads, and even then the drivers are responsible for their own safety.

Winter Operations - County of Calaveras

Information	Local roads	State Highways 4 – 12 – 26 -- 49
Snow removal policy	Link to policy	http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/roadinfo/snvice.htm
Winter driving tips		http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/roadinfo/wntdriv.htm
Road conditions	http://www.mymotherlode.com KVML 1610 AM	http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/roadinfo/wo.htm 1-800-427-7623
Chain control	KVML 1610 AM	http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/roadinfo/chains.htm
Parking restrictions	Link to policy	
Problems - email	snowplower@co.calaveras.ca.us	
telephone	(209)754-6402	
Local weather stations	http://www.arnoldweather.com/	
Bear Valley		http://www.ourbv.com/weather/BVWeather.htm
Bear Valley web cam		http://www.bearvalley.com/mountain/cam.html
Weather	http://radar.wrh.noaa.gov/radar/latest/DS.p19r0/si.kdax.shtml	