WINTER SNOW SERVICE FOR UNION COUNTY ROADS

Our intension is to provide helpful information in an attempt to limit frustration to those living in Union County during winter months by providing you information and education during snow plowing season. Please know that our staff is made up of local people that work, live, and play in our local community. Our crews take their job very serious and strive to do the best they can with what resources are available.

For snow removal on private driveways, public access roads, and road approaches there are many private contractors that provide these services. Also, we encourage you to make friends with your neighbors and help each other out during heavy snow events.

It is highly recommended that all vehicles be supplied with tire chains or other traction devices and that travelers become familiar with using them. Please drive cautiously when snow and/or ice are on the road, avoid driving in inclement weather when possible, and always carry emergency supplies in case you become stranded.

WINTER SNOW SERVICE PRIORITIES

Our winter snow service is a guideline for normal and routine winter events. Union County is not resourced with staff and equipment to maintain county roads at the standards described for large winter storms and widespread events. Standards may differ during large winter storms and widespread events.

Local and residential roads are not expected to be plowed the first day of a major snow event and may take up to three to five days before being plowed, depending on the amount of snowfall. Please be patient. Our resources are not available to respond to individual requests for plowing and sanding, however, snowplows will be reassigned when needed for emergency service access.

Union County roads will be cleared and maintained based on service level priority. The following factors are taken into consideration in establishing service priorities.

- The first consideration shall be safety of the citizens of Union County
- Second is the maintenance of bus routes for public schools
- Third is maintaining other arterial roads
- And finally, the opening of all county roads. Opening all county roads may take three to five days once a weather event has concluded.

Other factors taken into consideration are:

1. Road functional class
2. Traffic volumes
3. Availability of alternative routes
4. Steep grades, sharp curves, intersections, or potentially hazardous areas
5. Roads with adequate room to turn county equipment around
6. Emergency vehicle accessibility

Our maintenance district descriptions are:

1 Roving plow truck
1 Support vehicle (for responding to traffic accidents/hazards/emergencies, fueling snow equipment etc.)
District 1 – La Grande 219.20 miles
1 Grader and 2 one-ton pickup plows
District 2 – Imbler/Summerville 75 miles
1 Grader and 2 plow trucks
District 3 – Elgin 117.40 miles
1 Grader and 2 plow trucks
District 4 – Union/Cove 101.47 miles
1 Grader
District 5 – North Powder 72.95 miles
1 Grader

For all districts, efforts may be discontinued when blizzard or other severe forms of weather make operation of maintenance equipment and motor vehicles unreasonable and unsafe.

Please do not hesitate to call to report problems or concerns to the Public Works Department during business hours (Monday through Thursday, 6am to 4:30pm) at 541-963-1016, or by contacting the Sheriff's non-emergency number after hours, weekends, and holidays at 541-963-1017.

OUR GOALS

1. To provide access for emergency vehicles to as much of the county as possible.
2. To mitigate unsafe road surface conditions to the greatest extent possible with available resources.

WINTER MAINTENANCE HOURS OF OPERATION

Union County Public Works normal working hours during the winter is 6:00am to 4:30pm Monday through Thursday. We do not have the resources or budget to provide 7 days a week or 24 hours a day service coverage. We can extend the normal working hours with overtime by starting as early as 4:00am and finishing as late as 6:00pm but we do not provide 24 hour plow services.

LOCAL ACCESS ROADS

Local access roads are public roads that are not maintained by the county. Please know that snow and ice control operations will not be performed on local access roads.

SNOW REMOVAL AT MAILBOXES AND IN DRIVEWAYS

Our crews during winter snow events are working extremely hard to clear roads. All driveways are the responsibility of the property owner. Property owners should exercise caution during the removal of snow and ice from driveways. Snow from driveways shall not be plowed into the roads because accidents may occur and a legal liability may be placed on the individuals who placed the snow and ice in the roadway.

The county does not shovel or clear driveways that become encumbered with snow due to plowing, nor is it responsible for ensuring mailboxes are accessible. While we realize this may cause an inconvenience to homeowners, renters, and/or postal carriers, the department does not have the resources to provide snow removal services at this level. The primary purpose of plowing snow is to provide an open travel lane for the flow of traffic and commerce.

We are more than happy to reinstall mailboxes that are physically hit by county equipment but mailboxes knocked down by flying snow will not be reinstalled.

It is the responsibility of the property owner to provide clear access up to the mailbox for the postal carrier.

The county is not responsible for opening driveways that have access onto county roads. This is the responsibility of the property owner and property owners should not move snow onto the public roadway.

DAMAGE PRECAUTIONS

Signs and Posts – Caution will be taken to avoid damage to signs, mailboxes, posts, and delineators during snow removal.

Buildings – Snowplow operators will reduce speed where adjacent buildings or facilities might be damaged by the flying snow.

Parked and/or Unattended Vehicles – Care will be exercised in removing snow in the vicinity of vehicles parked adjacent to county roads. Even though vehicles are illegally parked on the travel way, reasonable care will be taken consistent with the necessity of completing the required work.

Residents are advised that it is illegal to park along a county road during snow accumulation, i.e., during a snowstorm. This is to ensure that a snowplow or motor grader can service the road without encountering a hindrance or creating a danger by leaving a berm within a traffic lane. Please give the Public Works office a call if for some reason you do need to leave a vehicle parked on a county road for a short period of time and we will do what we can to work with you. Although, vehicles left parked along a county road during a snowstorm may be subject to towing at the owners expense.

PROPERTY DAMAGE

Public Works is not responsible for damage to privately owned landscaping or structures, including but not limited to fences, signs, and wires that are installed within the public right-of-way.