



Winter Road Operations

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Flooding, wind, freezing rain, snow. The advent of another Pacific Coast winter threatens to create dangerous travel conditions and concern about access to work, school, and business.

This guide informs roadway users about Washington County's winter storm response plans. It also provides tips for travelers to help keep themselves safe.

Where to get current road information

Updates on storm or emergency traffic and road impacts are provided to the news media. Listen to local radio, watch local television coverage or visit local news media websites for up-to-date roads information. [FlashAlert Newswire](http://www.flashalertportland.net) (<http://www.flashalertportland.net>) is a source of traffic information. Emergency information is posted on [PublicAlerts](http://www.publicalerts.org) (<http://www.publicalerts.org>).

Current conditions on state highways are posted on [TripCheck](#) and are accessible by phone by dialing 511. [TripCheck Mobile](#) and [TripCheck Twitter](#) are also available.

Emergency road and lane closures on Washington County roads are posted on [Washington County Roads](#) (www.wc-roads.com) and on [WashcoRoads Twitter](#).

Who to call for help or to report a problem

To request emergency response for a life-threatening situation – call **9-1-1**

To report a non-emergency road hazard:

- After-hours – call **503-629-0111**
- During business hours:
 - State highways – [Oregon Department of Transportation](#) (ODOT) – **503-283-5859**
 - [County roads](#) – **503-846-ROAD** (846-7623) or wc-roads@co.washington.or.us
 - Streets inside cities – [city contacts](#)

To report flooding in the urban area outside a city – [Clean Water Services](#) – **503-681-3600**

Department of Land Use & Transportation
Operations and Maintenance
1400 SW Walnut Street, MS 51, Hillsboro, OR 97123-5625
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Operations Plan

Washington County coordinates winter road operations with ODOT, neighboring county road departments, and municipal public works agencies through the [Cooperative Public Agencies of Washington County](#), providing mutual support and response.

Priorities

Washington County is committed to planning, building and maintaining a great transportation system, ensuring the safety of all roadway users, and to operating the County roadway system in a cost-effective and environmentally responsible manner.

Washington County maintains about 1,300 miles of roadway, from urban arterials carrying over 40,000 vehicles per day to dead-end gravel roads carrying fewer than ten. The County does not have sufficient operational resources to inspect all roadways for weather-related hazards either during, after, or in anticipation of a storm, and may not have resources to immediately correct all known hazardous conditions.

To make the best use of resources, we identify **priority routes** that provide access to critical facilities, emergency services and major highways. These priority routes are the focus of our response to a winter storm event or emergency. (See [Emergency Transportation Routes Map](#).)

Roadways identified as emergency transportation routes receive attention first. Afterwards, the remaining arterial and collector routes will be serviced. Residential and local access roads are serviced on an as-needed basis only after all arterial and collector routes have been cleared.

Response

Weather forecasts issued by the [National Weather Service](#) or other reporting agencies are considered to determine an appropriate response to a storm or other emergency event.

If an event develops during regular business hours (Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.), the Operations Supervisors dispatch personnel and equipment as needed, under direction of the Operations Superintendent. If an event develops outside regular business hours, the on-call Operations Supervisor has responsibility for calling in on-call personnel and dispatching equipment. The Operations Supervisor has discretion to consider special circumstances, prudent use of public resources, and apparent degree of potential hazard in making special exceptions to plans and guidelines. During extended events, Road Operations may operate on a 24-hour basis.

Flooding

High water warning signs are posted when water covers part of a traffic lane, but the hazard can be avoided without creating a danger to traffic. **Road closure** barricades are set up when traffic lanes in one direction are covered with water or when water is flowing across the roadway creating dangerous driving conditions.

Ice and Snow

When icy conditions are forecast, **anti-icing** materials may be applied in areas that have been identified as being problematic to minimize slippery conditions. Anti-icing agents are typically applied prior to inclement weather. Road surface, humidity, air temperature, moisture, weather and multiple other factors are considered prior to anti-icing application.

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Non-toxic chemical **anti-icing** agents approved by the Pacific Northwest Snow-Fighters, including Magnesium Chloride (MGC), effectively help to prevent ice from forming and sticking to the road surface and may reduce the need for sanding.

When ice or snow cause roads to be slippery, roads may be **sanded** to improve traction. A clean, finely graded crushed aggregate, or **anti-skid** material, is mechanically spread at intersections, curves, on hills and other problem areas, at the discretion of the equipment operator. Sanding does not melt ice or snow. (See [Ice Control Route Map](#).)

Snow plows are not dispatched until after snowfall has stopped or until about three inches of snow has accumulated. Snow plows are usually kept off of priority routes during peak traffic hours to avoid congestion and visibility problems. (See [Snow Plow Route Map](#).)

Road closure barricades are set up when roadway conditions are extremely hazardous.

Best Management Practices

The application of anti-icing and anti-skid materials is guided by Washington County's adopted [Best Management Practices](#). Applications are made at the appropriate, minimal, rates consistent with environmental, meteorological and roadway traffic conditions. Equipment is properly calibrated and maintained to ensure proper application rates.

Traveler / resident tips

Make sure your **vehicle** is properly maintained and equipped for winter driving. Tire chains may be appropriate in some situations.

Please respect **road closures**. Heavy equipment may be operating, bridges and culverts may be out of service or other hazardous conditions may exist. Road closures are for everyone's safety and apply to all road users – motorists, pedestrians, and bicyclists. It is unlawful to move or travel around a road closure barricade.

Please remove **parked vehicles** and other property from public roadways and rights-of-way to assist in the snow removal effort.

Make sure **mail boxes** are properly located and installed in accordance with County and United States Postal Service standards. Only those receptacles that meet these standards, and which were damaged by actual contact with County snow removal equipment, will be considered for repair at County expense. Claims are considered on a case-by-case basis.

County employees may assist stranded travelers by contacting law enforcement or other emergency personnel. County employees will not attempt to remove or extract vehicles.

Put safety first. Exercise caution and drive with care. The life you save may be your own.

More [winter travel tips...](#)

Rev. 11/2/15

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