

## WCRC MISSION STATEMENT

The Washtenaw County Road Commission is responsible for maintaining a road system that is reasonably safe and convenient to the traveling public.

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### BOARD OF ROAD COMMISSIONERS

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*Chair*

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*Managing Director*

**James D. Harmon, P.E.**  
*Director of Operations*

**Ed Reed**  
*Superintendent of Maintenance*

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## QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS?

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*Office Hours: 7:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.*

WASHTENAW COUNTY ROAD COMMISSION

555 N. Zeeb Road

Ann Arbor, MI 48103



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# Winter Road Maintenance



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## WINTER MAINTENANCE

Winter road maintenance is top priority for the Washtenaw County Road Commission (WCRC). The WCRC employs over sixty certified, professional snowplow and heavy equipment operators to combat winter weather on public roads. WCRC crews strive to keep 1,650 county road miles and 581 state trunkline miles clear and passable. The WCRC relies upon professional weather forecasting services and constant staff observations to track winter storm conditions twenty-four hours a day.

## ROAD PRIORITIES

WCRC winter maintenance crews maintain state trunklines and county roads in Washtenaw County based on a priority system:

- At the top of the list are 'Priority 1' state trunklines, including I-94, US-23, US-12, M-17, M-153, and M-52.
- Next are 'Priority 2 and 3' roads, which include medium to high volume paved roads like Carpenter Rd, North Territorial Rd, Plymouth Rd, and Austin Rd.
- After clearing higher volume roads, crews move to 'Priority 4' subdivision roads and 'Priority 5' gravel roads which see far fewer vehicles. Overtime is only authorized on Priority 4 and 5 roads after a four-inch accumulation of snow, an ice storm, or blowing and drifting snow which interferes with the flow of vehicular traffic. Long-lasting or consecutive storms can delay trucks from servicing subdivision streets and gravel roads for several days.

## SAFETY FIRST

Exercise extreme caution during inclement weather. If you must drive, carefully monitor weather advisories, give fellow drivers extra room and slow down.

## RUSH HOUR STORMS

The storms likely to cause the most inconvenience for drivers are those that strike just before or during the morning or afternoon weekday rush hours. During rush hour storms, WCRC snowplow drivers battle the same traffic and conditions as other motorists, as they attempt to plow or de-ice the roads. Increased traffic volumes can significantly slow road clearing efforts.

## DON'T CROWD THE PLOW!



WCRC drivers are specially trained to drive salt trucks and snowplows. But WCRC drivers need your help when it comes to maneuvering their large trucks along roadways or through traffic. Please give them plenty of room to do their job. Snow and ice discharging from these plows is intense. For the safety of all, avoid passing a snowplow. Do your part.

Don't Crowd The Plow!

## WINTER MAINTENANCE COST

- The WCRC typically spends \$2 to \$3 million annually on winter maintenance, including nearly \$1 million on salt alone, with no lasting road improvements to show for it.
- A countywide, full crew deployment for winter maintenance costs approximately \$8,500 per hr.
- A heavy snow storm can cost the WCRC more than \$400,000 to clear, including the costs of salt, sand, vehicle operation and maintenance, wages, and overtime. The same storm can require three days of clean up to clear all roads.
- **Due to a steady decline in transportation revenues, along with rapidly rising costs, the WCRC has made difficult but responsible changes to winter service levels.**

## WINTER MAINTENANCE FACTS

- ❄ The WCRC deploys a fleet of forty-six snowplows, ready twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week during the winter.
- ❄ A single snowplow run can use up to twelve tons of salt.
- ❄ As temperatures fall to 10-20 degrees, the action of salt (which lowers the freezing temperature of water) takes longer to work.
- ❄ Sand is used on unpaved roads and sometimes on paved roads during extremely cold temperatures, when salt is less effective. Sand may provide better traction, but it doesn't melt snow and ice.