

# Snow Removal in New Hampshire



Q  
& A

*New Hampshire*  
**DOT**  
*Department of Transportation*

## Responds to Commonly Asked Questions about Snow Removal Operations

**Q** During a snowstorm a plow truck knocked over my mailbox, will the state repair/replace it?

**A** Despite our precautions, plow trucks, or typically the plowed snow, can inadvertently strike or push over a mailbox. This usually occurs during periods of low visibility or during heavy snowfalls. The New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NHDOT) will not assume responsibility for repairs to those boxes located in the state right-of-way; however, we will work with the homeowner to locate or design a mailbox system that will minimize the possibility of snowplow damage.

**Q** Why is my road the last to get plowed?

**A** NHDOT has prioritized all of its roads for winter maintenance based upon the amount of traffic carried and the importance of the facilities served. Plow routes are assigned to facilitate compliance with the Department's Snow & Ice Policy, which spells out the allowable snow accumulation on the road and the frequency of the plowing effort. This frequently can vary between 1<sup>1/2</sup> and 3<sup>1/2</sup> hours for a typical storm.



Left: Salt gets loaded into an NHDOT plow truck

Far left: One of NHDOT's Highway Maintainers works to clear snow from his assigned route

**Q** During a snowstorm is it safe for me to be out driving around?

**A** In most storms, it is recommended that travel be limited to essential trips only. It is important to remember that travel conditions during a storm vary greatly depending on the type and intensity of the storm. Before venturing out you should consider the type and condition of your vehicle, your physical and mental condition, and the reason for making the trip at this time. If you feel you must go out during a storm, it's recommended you check the weather forecast for the area you plan to travel.

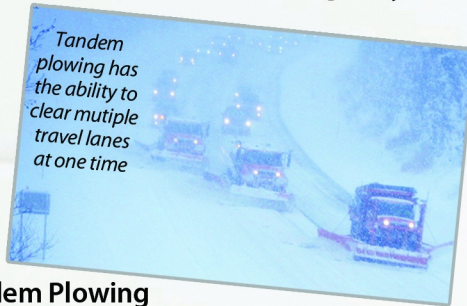
**Q** What materials does NHDOT use in performing snow and ice removal?

**A** Salt (sodium chloride), sand and calcium chloride are all utilized in combating winter storms in New Hampshire. Salt is the principal anti-icer, as it has been proven to be the most cost effective anti-icing agent available. Sand can enhance traction on hills and corners during a storm. Calcium chloride is used with salt in very cold storms to act as a trigger to start the formation of salt brine to aid in the anti-icing process. **Q How does the treatment work?**

**A** Salt and/or calcium chloride mix with the snow and cause the freezing temperature of the snow to become less than 32 degrees. In doing so, the snow is less able to freeze to the pavement as vehicle tires drive over it, and the plow trucks can scrape the pavement clean.

**Q** On multi-lane highways there can be up to six plows in a row, why are there so many?

**A** Tandem plowing clears the snow from all lanes at once, eliminating snow ridges between lanes that might be a hazard to motorists. If you encounter tandem plowing, please stay back and do not attempt to pass among the plow trucks. Tandem plowing is the safest and most efficient snow removal method for multi-lane highways. Plowing in tandem clears all lanes at once by passing a ridge of snow from one plow to the next.



### Advantages of Tandem Plowing

- Ability to completely clear a roadway and deposit snow at the side of the roadway.
- Increases the productivity of overall plowing operations.
- Efficiently and effectively clears snow from all lanes while treating the entire roadway.
- Requires less use of anti-icing materials, and saves time and money.
- Eliminates the buildup of snow and ice caused from vehicle traffic.
- Avoids leaving ridges of snow in the road that can be potentially dangerous when changing lanes.
- Reduces the number and severity of crashes.
- Prevents issue of having snow thrown back onto previously plowed pavement.
- Allows for some trucks to separate and immediately clear blocked ramps.
- Removes snow from narrow medians (adjacent to far left lanes) to the right shoulder.
- Prevents unsafe driving maneuvers, including vehicles passing plows.

**Q** Why doesn't the snowplow carry the snow past my driveway instead of plowing into it?

**A** As we plow we need to keep a consistent plowed width of roadway. If the truck swerved out around your driveway or swerved in to address your driveway, the plowed road would curve in and out and the width of the plowed road would vary.



**Q** Once a winter storm has ended, when can I expect travel conditions to return to normal?

**A** This varies depending on storm intensity and highway priority. The Interstate System, Turnpike System and other heavily traveled highways are maintained in such a manner that bare pavement is produced as soon as practical after termination of a storm. On state highways with low traffic volumes, the NHDOT attempts to provide some bare pavement, but not necessarily from shoulder to shoulder, within a day or two after a storm ends.

**Q** Should I expect roads in NH to be snow covered during a winter storm?

**A** Yes, it is virtually impossible to provide bare pavement during a winter storm and the NHDOT does not attempt to do so. NHDOT maintains highways in accordance with the state's winter Snow & Ice Policy ([www.nh.gov/dot](http://www.nh.gov/dot)). This policy requires plowing frequencies based on traffic volume and highway priority. This policy also specifies maximum accumulations permitted on state highways during, and following, a winter storm. These accumulations can vary from 3" of snow on major routes to 6" of snow on lower volume state highways.

# SAFETY TIPS for Winter Driving



✓ Use Your Seatbelt!

✓ Keep Your Car in Good Shape!

- Battery
- Brakes
- Tires
- Heater & Defroster
- Wipers & Windshield Fluid
- Maintain a full gas tank
- Brush off car
- Clear windshield
- Clear all windows

✓ Increase Your Following Distance - Try 5 seconds instead of 2 seconds.

✓ Adhere to Advisory Warnings.

✓ Keep Back from Plow Trucks!

✓ Do NOT Use Your Cruise Control!

✓ Maintain an Emergency Kit in the Vehicle, Including:

- Shovel
- Flares
- Warm Clothing
- Non-Perishable Food
- A Flash Light
- A Candle
- Matches

✓ Perform ALL Maneuvers Slowly - Acceleration, turning or braking.

✓ SLOW DOWN - Higher speed decreases traction making braking and cornering more difficult.

✓ Allow Additional Time to Reach Your Destination.

✓ NEVER Pass a Plow Truck Using the Highway Shoulder or Breakdown Lane.



**DON'T CROWD  
the PLOW**