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The GCRC is preparing for winter during COVID

With winter being around the corner, the Genesee County Road Commission (GCRC) is doing what it does every year: preparing. But this winter may pose new challenges for keeping our roads clear.

Over the years, maintenance workers have handled everything winter could throw at them but, with the continuing threat of COVID-19, this year may be different. We're going to have contingency plans in place, but we want drivers to know the pandemic could affect our ability to maintain winter levels of service.

The goal of GCRC remains to clear highways to the bare pavement as quickly as possible after a winter storm. If GCRC is affected by COVID-19 infections or associated quarantines, it may take longer to reach this goal.

During snowstorms, GCRC will have all available staff out working to clear roads as quickly as possible. Still, we're asking the public for their patience and understanding if we need to manage temporary staff shortages.

As we move into winter, drivers need to remember they also share responsibility for safety when they venture out. Motorists must follow Michigan's Basic Speed Law, which requires them to drive at a reasonable speed for the condition in all driving conditions, allowing them to stop within the clear distance ahead.

GCRC reminds the public of the actions motorists should take now to be prepared for inclement driving conditions.

- Prepare your vehicle for winter driving, such as making sure tires are in good condition and that all snow and ice have been cleared from your vehicle before heading onto the road.
- Give plow operators extra space, and consider staying behind them in winter storms.
- Other reminders for winter driving, such as avoiding distractions, using headlights during winter weather, and leaving extra space between vehicles.

Other Weather Factors

But it's not just significant snowstorms that require us to crank up our salt trucks and plows. Freezing rain or a light dusting of snow that turns to ice can demand that we send out our full force of salt trucks and plows for hours on end. And, to ensure we're prepared when bad weather hits, we monitor the weather 24 hours a day, seven days a week during the winter, using Doppler radar and several professional weather services.

Road Priorities

We're often asked how we decide which roads to salt or plow first. It's quite simple: We focus first on the roads with the most traffic, except in situations where abnormal conditions exist, or emergencies involving public health and safety occur. That means we'll work on the freeways and major thoroughfares before less-traveled streets. It also implies subdivision streets and gravel roads are usually the last to be cleared.

Here's our official winter maintenance priority ranking:

Class I

All state highways and multi-lane (four or more) primary roads

Class II

Multi-lane primary and high ADT (average daily traffic) single lane primary roads

Class III

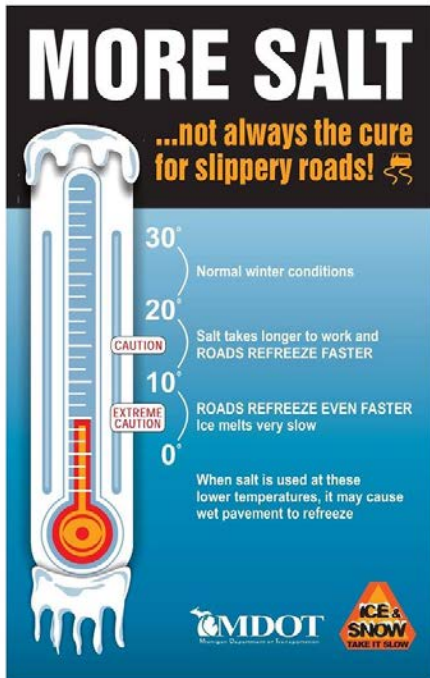
Low volume primary and high volume paved roads

Class IV

The remainder of primary and local roads

Class V

Subdivisions and local gravel roads



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Please slow down in work zones, for your family and ours.