



Winter Maintenance



Fact Sheet

Do your part to keep our highways safe this winter by planning ahead and always driving according to weather and road conditions. And travel safely around snowplows to make it easier for maintenance crews to clear snow and ice from our roads as quickly and efficiently as possible.

This is what the Ministry of Transportation does to keep our highways safe:

- ❖ Ontario has some of the highest road maintenance standards in North America.
- ❖ It uses the latest technology, such as pre-wetted salt to enhance its effectiveness, and sensors to monitor weather and road conditions so snow removal equipment can be sent out when it's needed.
 - It uses technology to predict winter storms and proactively plan and deploy snow removal equipment.
 - Anti-icing liquid is spread on the highway before winter weather begins to help prevent snow from sticking to the highway surface. It also improves the effectiveness of plowing operations.
 - Equipment may be installed at bridges to automatically spray anti-icing liquid.
- ❖ It provides drivers with a tool to get information on current road conditions by calling 511 or going online at **ontario.ca/trip** which are both available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

This is how its provincial highways are maintained in the winter:

- ❖ Snowplowing, sanding and salting are provided by contractors who are required to meet specific standards, specifications and performance requirements.
 - Their performance is monitored before, during and after a storm and if the contractors do not meet the standards, they face serious consequences.
- ❖ Contractors are responsible for more than 16,000 km of provincial highways.
 - They use more than 1,000 snowplows, sanders and salt trucks to fight winter storms on provincial highways.
 - Some use tow plows; a full-length trailer-mounted plow blade that is capable of clearing an additional lane when maneuvered into an adjacent lane.
- ❖ Contractors are required to:
 - Begin plowing provincial highways when there is an accumulation of 2 cm of snow or slush.
 - Begin sanding or salting within 30 minutes of the start of winter weather.
 - Monitor the winter storm and adjust operations dependant upon the intensity and duration of the weather, and the precipitation type.
 - Plow continuously and sand or salt to reduce slippery conditions during the storm and throughout the clean-up after the storm.
 - Clear through lanes first, and then begin removing snow from exit ramps, turning lanes, truck climbing and passing lanes, shoulders and medians.

However:

- ❖ A severe or long storm may delay the clearing of highways, even with the best efforts of road crews.
- ❖ It may take up to eight hours for plows or sanders to begin servicing ramps and low-volume highways.
- ❖ Extreme weather may result in closing the highway.