

Board of Branch County Road Commissioners
Policy Statement

Date: 11/05/2009

Winter Road Maintenance Policy and Procedure

Purpose: To provide a winter maintenance policy and procedure for all certified public roads within Branch County due to declining revenues, increased costs, and related budget limitations.

Winter Maintenance operations will be conducted in accordance with an established priority system based on traffic volume and road systems.

- Priority 1 – State Trunklines
- Priority 2 – County Primary Roads
- Priority 3 – Paved Local Roads
- Priority 4 – Subdivision/Gravel Roads

Priority 1 – State Trunklines

The Michigan Department of Transportation has established an updated priority level for all MDOT roadways within Branch County.

Level I – Interstate 69

Provide maintenance service as appropriate under prevailing weather condition, with a goal of providing a pavement surface over its entire width generally bare of ice and snow. This work may be accomplished using overtime as necessary.

Level II – U.S. Highway & Michigan Highways – US12 and M86

Provide maintenance service as appropriate under prevailing weather conditions, with a goal of providing a pavement with one wheel track in each direction. Clearing the pavement bare of ice and snow over its entire width will be accomplished as soon as reasonably possible after, without using overtime.

Please feel free to contact Al Bessey at the Transportation Service Center in Calhoun County for further information (269)-789-0592.

Priority 2 – County Primary Roads

Roadways will be scraped; sand/salt material applied to high volume primary roads and on hills, curves and intersections for low volume primary roads, prior to moving to lesser priority roadways; with a goal of providing a pavement with a minimum of one wheel track in each direction.

Hours of Snow Removal: Monday through Friday - 7 A.M. until 3:30 P.M. Plowing operations may begin earlier and end later when slippery conditions exist or snow levels have reached about 3 inches.

Hours of Snow Removal: Saturday and Sunday – No overtime, unless slippery conditions or the possibility of future slippery conditions based on the weather forecast. These hours will be observed with 5” or less. Hours will vary with more than 5 inches, or if determined necessary due to freezing rain or extreme drifting of snow. Winter maintenance crews are prepared to respond accordingly.

Priority 3 – Paved Local Roads

Roadways will be scraped; sand/salt material applied on hills, curves and intersections.

Hours of Snow Removal: Monday through Friday - 7 A.M. until 3:30 P.M. Plowing operations may begin earlier and end later when slippery conditions exist or snow levels have reached about 3 inches.

Hours of Snow Removal: Saturday and Sunday – No overtime
These hours will be observed with 5” or less. Hours will vary with more than 5 inches, or if determined necessary due to freezing rain or extreme drifting of snow.

Priority 4 – Subdivision/Gravel Roads

Roadways will be scraped when time allows. If scraping doesn't happen the day of the event, it will be the following day. In subdivisions, only intersections at a primary or local road will have a sand/salt material applied.

Slippery Spots Called In

Will be at the discretion of the Road Operations Foreman.

Plowing Service Limitations

The Branch County Road Commissions snow removal policy is designed to provide the best service possible, but residents should have realistic expectations. With unpredictable weather conditions or events and limited financial resources absolutely safe roads are not possible. All drivers are encouraged to drive defensively. Even with the best service, driving conditions may still be hazardous in the winter months.

Overtime Policy

Road Commission winter maintenance crews will not work overtime (after regular hours or on weekends) on local (township) roads or in subdivisions *unless* at least five inches of snow has fallen. Overtime on local roads will be allowed when less than five inches of snow has fallen only in cases of freezing rain or extreme drifting of snow. Overtime will be worked, to establish the desired level of winter maintenance, on state trunklines and county primary roads.

Emergency Snow Event Contingency Plan

In emergency situations, where roads are impassable, the Branch County Road Commission will work with police and fire departments and doctors and hospitals, to the best of its ability, to provide access during emergency situations.

Clearing Snow from Driveways

State law (MCLA 257.677a) prohibits residents or businesses from plowing snow, ice or slush onto or across roadways or highways. In addition, snow must not be piled in such a way as to obstruct motorists' vision. Snowplows operate by pushing snow to the right, so when clearing your driveway, pile snow to the right of your driveway (as you face the road), keeping road shoulders clear; this will help reduce the amount of snow pushed into or in front of your driveway.