

DID YOU KNOW???

SNOWPLOW DRIVERS ASK FOR YOUR COOPERATION

Now that snowplowing season has arrived, highway crews ask for cooperation and understanding from drivers. First, if a snowstorm begins during the night or on weekends or holidays, it takes time for highway crews to leave their homes, get to their trucks, load up with sand or salt and begin plowing approximately 15-20 miles of road (30-40 lane miles). Meanwhile, for the motorists that are on the roads when the storm begins, their road may be slippery and require slow driving for a period of time until the highway crews remove the snow and improve traction. If the snowstorm continues, it doesn't take long for the roads to be covered again. Sadly, motorists are an impatient group and are not happy if the roads aren't cleared to our expectations but yet get aggravated if we must follow these snowplows for any distance.

By nature of the task snowplowing operations take place during poor visibility. Thus we need to be aware that our vehicles complicate plowing operations. Drivers tend to follow plows too closely. The nature of clearing the roads of snow often require plows to back up, usually at intersections, where they must turn the corner, dump the load of snow, and back up before continuing. Too often vehicles fill the space where the plow must back into. Give the plow plenty of space, especially at intersections.

Another major consideration is that the center of the road must be cleared which necessitates the front left part of the plow crossing the center line and into the oncoming lane (note the plow blade over the centerline in the picture with this article). This means when you encounter an oncoming snowplow, you should slow down and move over as far as is practical to give the snowplow room to clear the center of the roadway. As a motorist, don't complain that the snowplow driver is forcing you into the shoulder – be glad he is doing his job properly.



Rural mailboxes and other roadside objects, such as illegally parked vehicles, add to the difficulty of a snowplow operator's job. They do their best to avoid these obstacles, but occasionally a hit mailbox is the result of an oncoming vehicle not giving the snowplow enough room, requiring the plow operator to move closer to the side of the road. When the occasional mailbox is hit and destroyed during plowing operations, you should be aware that, under traffic law and commissioner's regulations, the municipality responsible for the plowing operations is under no obligation to fix or replace that mailbox. Remember, they are driving a large vehicle with a wide, heavy plow on the front, a wing plow on the side, a load of sand or salt with controls for applying the sand or salt on the highway, all of which must be operated by one person while driving this rig in poor visibility at all times of the day and night, and still contend with other motorists that do not appreciate this difficult and dangerous task.

So, as we demand a high level of service on our winter roadways, remember it comes as a result of dedicated employees trying to keep our roads as safe as possible while contending with miserable weather conditions, impatient motorists, objects along the highway, at all times of the day and night – because we demand it. So, let's start appreciating it.

For more on traffic safety, go to: www.franklincony.org and, under "Departments", click on "Traffic Safety Board". Under "Services", you will find "Did You Know" articles.