



### Fast Facts – Winter Maintenance

- ✦ Saskatchewan's Ministry of Highways and Infrastructure has 85 winter maintenance sections located throughout the province. The ministry operates a fleet of 290 plow trucks.
- ✦ Highways are inspected frequently to determine if snow removal and/or salt and sand application is needed, and to report up-to-date highway conditions to the Highway Hotline. "Night Riders" travel a 500 km radius around Regina, Saskatoon and Prince Albert to report conditions and treat snow and ice on a 24-hour basis.
- ✦ Highways in the province are prioritized for snow removal and ice treatment. This prioritization is based on highway classification and traffic volumes (Annual Average Daily Traffic – AADT).
- ✦ **Level 1 – Inter-provincial routes and highways with greater than 1,500 AADT**  
The highest priority is given to major inter-provincial routes, commuter routes and highways that connect communities with a population of 3,000 or greater.
  - Snow removal is initiated after 3 cm of snow has accumulated.
  - Snow is plowed from the driving lanes within six hours of the end of the storm. Additional time may be required in extreme circumstances.
  - Ice is treated or assessed for treatment within six hours of the end of the storm.
- ✦ **Level 2 – Highways with an AADT between 300 and 1,500**
  - Snow is plowed from the driving lanes within 12 hours of the end of the storm.
  - Ice is treated or assessed for treatment within 12 hours of the end of the storm.
- ✦ **Level 3 – Highways with an AADT less than 300**
  - Snow removal commences as soon as resources are available without jeopardizing service on Level 1 or Level 2 highways and should be plowed within 24 hours of the end of the storm.
  - Ice is treated or assessed for treatment within 24 hours of the end of the storm.
- ✦ Snow and ice removal equipment is mobilized before, during and after storms. Winter equipment operators are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

- ✦ In very severe storms, equipment is pulled off of the road for the safety of the operators and any motorists that may be on the highway. Environment Canada defines “zero visibility” as the ability to see less than 200 metres. Under this condition, highway maintenance equipment will not begin work on the road until visibility improves. Equipment already on the road may be removed when visibility deteriorates to 100 metres.
- ✦ Wind conditions are always a component of Saskatchewan winter storms. Winds can hamper snow clearing operations by creating snow drifts and reduced visibility resulting in many extra hours to clear the snow.
- ✦ In cold conditions a lot more salt is needed to melt ice. At temperatures below -6 C, road salt loses its effectiveness. For example at -1 C, 1 kg of salt will melt 46.3 kg of ice, but will melt only 3.2 kg of ice at -23 C.
- ✦ Remember that it takes a lot further to stop on ice covered and snow packed roads. Slush surfaces take twice as far, soft or loose snow takes three times as far, and packed snow takes four times as far. Ice covered roads can require up to 12 times further to stop your vehicle! Remember bridges and overpasses can be slippery when the rest of the roadway is not.
- ✦ The department may temporarily close any section of highway(s) during, or as a result of, winter storm conditions in the interest of public safety due to limited visibility, obstructions on the roadway, or hazardous surface conditions. This could be as a result of zero visibility, snow blocked roads, snow drifts, ice-covered roads or traffic accidents which block the roadway.



The **Highway Hotline** provides the public with up-to-date road conditions and highway driving information. During the winter months, November 1st to March 31<sup>st</sup> (or past these dates if winter conditions persist), conditions are updated at 8:00 a.m., 10:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m., or whenever there are known changes that affect driving conditions. This service is provided 7 days a week, 24 hours a day. Conditions shown are those that were current at the last report. Motorists are cautioned to be alert to changing conditions.

More than 1.6 million motorists accessed the Hotline by Internet and phone last year.

To view the interactive highway conditions map go to: [www.highways.gov.sk.ca](http://www.highways.gov.sk.ca)

#### *Highway Hotline numbers*

SaskTel Cellular Network: \*ROAD

Saskatchewan: 1-888-335-7623

Regina and area: 787-7623

Saskatoon and area: 933-8333

For more detailed information, please refer to *Winter Maintenance - Technical Backgrounder* at [www.highways.gov.sk.ca](http://www.highways.gov.sk.ca).