

2020/2021 Winter anticipated to be more wet than white,,,

Walworth County Public Works Highway Division strives to provide timely and effective winter maintenance services, to all County roadways, to provide motorists with passable roadways when winter weather events occur. Highway is responsible for clearing snow from approximately 400 lane miles of County Trunk Highways and approximately 700 lane miles of State Highways.

The primary goal of winter maintenance for Highway is to achieve passable roadways for all roads.

This does not mean that the traveled portion of a roadway will be cleared to the pavement. In fact, the traveling public should be aware that the traveled portions of roadways and/or bridges will, at times, have snow and/or ice creating slippery conditions. As such, please drive safely according to current conditions. For reference - a "Passable roadway" is defined as a roadway surface that is free from as much ice and snow pack as is practical and can be traveled safely at a reasonable speed; whereas "Reasonable speed" is defined as a speed that a vehicle can travel without losing traction.

The traveling public also have responsibilities during winter weather events. It is illegal (Wis. Statute 346.915) to follow a snowplow closer than 200 feet upon any roadway having a posted speed limit of more than 35mph if the snowplow is actively engaged in snow/ice removal. Motorists should limit their travel as much as possible when hazardous conditions exist. This can be accomplished by asking the question – "Do I really need to drive in this weather"? If so, drive carefully and reduce your speed according to conditions and below the posted limits.

Winter weather is unpredictable and the actions taken for each event relate to current conditions, types and amount of precipitation, ground and ambient air temperature, and the pending forecast. All of these variables create singular challenges; however, each event elicits a response guided by a program established over the course of many years.

Each fall, Highway reviews the winter maintenance manual and makes necessary alterations to encompass changes in staff, snow removal strategies, and the efficient integration of new equipment. As has been the case for the previous two winters, continued focus on the effective integration of salt brine applications into the winter maintenance strategy will continue in the upcoming winter. Salt Brine is a chemical solution of salt and water that has a freezing point lower than that of water and, for use in winter maintenance operations, is a useful tool in enhancing the effectiveness of salt on the roadway and reducing the likelihood of winter precipitation bonding to the roadway surface. Additional materials are added to this solution to further reduce the freezing point and increase the effectiveness of salt applied to roadways. Beyond the improved effectiveness we expect to achieve using brine, it is our intent to reduce overall salt usage to protect Walworth County lakes and streams from the long-term effects of salt products.

Please contact the Department of Public Works at (262) 741-3114 Option 1 for any additional questions or information.

