



How You Can Prepare

- Before you travel: Check weather conditions and, if a winter storm is predicted, ask yourself: “Is this trip really necessary? Is it worth risking my life in potentially dangerous conditions?”
- Have a plan in place to cover child care, work, school and family.
- Winterize your car:
 - ❑ Check ignition, brakes, wiring, hoses and belts
 - ❑ Check filters
 - ❑ Check the battery
 - ❑ Check tires for air pressure, wear and tread depth
 - ❑ Check antifreeze and other fluid levels
 - ❑ Carry a blanket, extra food and water, a flashlight and cell phone
- If you become stranded: Call the Texas Department of Public Safety’s stranded motorist hotline at (800) 525-5555.
- Monitor TxDOT’s Road Conditions on the TxDOT Web site.

Where to Go for More Info

For more on Winter Driving Tips, go to:
http://www.txdot.gov/safety/tips/winter_driving.htm

For current road conditions:
http://www.txdot.gov/travel/road_conditions.htm

For safety tips for sharing the road with snow plows:
http://www.txdot.gov/safety/tips/snowplow_safety.htm

Moving Vehicles Out of the Way:

TxDOT’s mission is to keep roadways open and as safe as possible for all motorists. Sometimes, it may be necessary for us to move a stranded vehicle that is blocking traffic. Texas law provides us with the authority to do so in emergencies such as snow and ice storms. Depending upon the immediate situation and the services available at the time, we may use a towing service or simply move the vehicle to the side of the road with TxDOT equipment. TxDOT will not be responsible for damages. If you can move your vehicle to the side of the road where it is not blocking traffic, you should do so.



Safety is Our Top Priority

For the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), nothing is more important than safety. Especially during harsh winter weather, our primary objective is to provide motorists with safe travel on all of the roadways we maintain. We do this through the strategic use of various resources at our disposal as well as through the dedication, determination and teamwork of the men and women of TxDOT.

Roadways are prioritized by Interstate, U.S. Highway, state highway and Farm-to-Market as well as bridges, overpasses, high traffic interchanges and high traffic roadways. Local authorities are responsible for city and county roads.

Which Roads Are TxDOT's Responsibility?

TxDOT is responsible for all Interstate, U.S., state and Farm-to-Market roadways. Local city and county entities are responsible for local roadways.

Hot Spots for First Responders

- First priority: Interstate and U.S. highways, high-level interchanges and long-grade ramps, steep grades and curves.
- Second priority: State highways and farm-to-market roadways.

How We Prepare

TxDOT crews begin preparing for winter weather early in the season. Equipment is inventoried, inspected and calibrated for quick response. Pre-icing and de-icing materials are inventoried and ordered, as needed. Stockpiles are replenished with enough materials for a multiple day event and emergency contracts are readied, just in case. "Watch for Ice on Bridges" signs are opened at the beginning of the season.

Before a Predicted Ice/Snow Event

Equipment Preparations

- All equipment is serviced.
- Spreader boxes are installed on dump trucks.
- Spreader equipment is calibrated to deliver correct material amounts.
- Heavy equipment loaders are staged and operable.

Other Preparations

- Routes are determined and assigned according to winter weather plans.
- Sand and chemical stockpiles are strategically located in areas expected to be impacted.
- TxDOT monitors weather reports and communicates with nearby districts to determine if help is needed.
- If needed, crews may be dispatched to pre-treat bridges and overpasses.
- Districts participate in National Weather Service conference calls.

During an Ice/Snow Event

- Supervisors continually monitor weather and road conditions, traffic cameras, road sensors, hotlines and management reports.
- Personnel and equipment adjustments are made as needed.
- Crews spread sand and pre-icer or de-icer materials along assigned routes.
- Work continues 24/7 to keep roadways passable.
- Public Information Officers work with the media (newspapers, radio, TV) and through social media networks (Twitter, Facebook, etc.) to get road condition information out to the public.
- Road conditions are updated on TxDOT's Web site.

After an Ice/Snow Event

- Material stockpiles are replenished to be ready for the next event.
- Roadways are swept clean of excess sand or other materials.
- Winter plans are evaluated for effectiveness and adjusted if needed.

Materials Used

- Pre-icing: Liquid magnesium chloride is primarily sprayed on bridges and overpasses before a storm to help prevent a hard bond of ice, reduce snow buildup and to speed snow and ice breakup.
- De-icing: Magnesium chloride pellets are mixed with sand to help remove thick layers of ice already on the road. Magnesium chloride is made with natural sea salt and is less corrosive than rock salt and more environmentally friendly than baking soda.
- Grade 5 Sand: used to improve traction and as a mixing agent for magnesium chloride.
- Salt: still preferred in some situations because it is very fast-acting. Sometimes used to free up stalled trucks on an icy road.
- Calcium Magnesium Acetate: chemical formulation of dolomitic lime and acetic acid. Used in a granular form, it is easier to spread with pickups than the larger bulk bags of magnesium chloride.