

Ask a Plow Truck Driver

Did you know over the last five winters, Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) used an average of 844,000 tons of salt to keep Pennsylvania drivers moving. PennDOT wants to help people travel safely all year long. The reality though, is Pennsylvania experiences winter weather that can wreak havoc. PennDOT is prepared and dedicated to keeping the roads open and passable. Join us as we have a conversation with a PennDOT plow truck driver, who is out there making Pennsylvania roads safe to travel on during winter weather.

It is snowing! Why is my road not plowed yet?



While snow is falling, roads will NOT be free of ice and snow and here is why. If snow is falling at 1 inch per hour, for example, and a truck takes three hours to return to the start of its route, 3 inches of snow has fallen. Whether an operator is plowing snow from a roadway depends on the depth or heaviness of snow or slush,

severity of the storm and in what stage of the storm the truck is being operated.

During a storm, we will plow and salt major highways first before moving to the less traveled rural roads. During severe winter storms, equipment is often redirected from assigned rural routes to assist with plowing heavily traveled roads first. Also remember plows use the same roads we all travel on. As traffic or precipitation increases, so does the time it takes for a plow to complete its route. If you are stuck in traffic, so are we. This means that if storms hit at rush hour, you should plan extra time for your commute.

Where is my plow?

All of PennDOT's more than 2,200 PennDOT-owned and rented plow trucks are equipped with Automated Vehicle Location (AVL) systems, which use in-truck technology to log and share data in real-time for that truck. The routes of these interstate and expressway trucks can be viewed in real-time at www.511PA.com. The AVL unit in each truck sends a cellular signal through the system showing where a truck is located and whether or how much material is being spread from the truck.

To learn more about winter driving, download your own Winter Driving Guide here:

<http://www.dot.state.pa.us/public/PubsForms/Publications/PUB%20650.pdf>

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National Weather Service Recognizes Pennsylvania After All 67 Counties Achieve StormReady® Status



The foundation of resilient communities is families and businesses that are prepared for emergencies.

Tips for a Warm and Safe Winter: Check Your Heating Fuel Tank

Did you know? After you call your local company to schedule an oil or propane delivery, it can travel many miles to reach the tank at your home. At any point along the route, a range of factors can arise to potentially cause a delay:

- Fire, power outages, storm-related closures, equipment freeze-up, flooding, or leaks can happen before the oil or propane is put into a truck.
- Once it is in the truck, hazardous road conditions can slow travel.
- When the delivery reaches your residence, accumulated snow and ice can make it difficult to access the tank.

Although these disruptions are not typical, they can and sometimes do occur. The risk can increase in extreme weather, when there is also increased demand for oil and propane. Do not wait until you have just a week's supply or your tank is empty before calling to schedule a delivery. Check your tank regularly and call for delivery early.

For more tips for residential heating oil tank owners, visit: dep.pa.gov/homeheatingoil.

Winter Preparedness for Pets

Beware of cold temperatures. While many pets can be safe in outside temperatures for short periods of time, puppies, smaller dogs, older dogs, and cats should not be left outdoors for an extended period of time when the temperature falls below 40 degrees.

Watch for signs of frostbite and injury. Dogs' ears, paws, and tails are especially susceptible to frostbite. If you suspect frostbite, contact your veterinarian. If your dog plays on ice or hard frozen dirt, their paws are susceptible to cuts as their paws slide across these rough surfaces. Always wipe your dog's feet after a walk in the snow to remove ice balls and salt deposits from the road. Salt irritates a dog's paws and can be toxic if ingested. Use only pet-safe ice melt.



Keep an eye out for hypothermia. If you notice shivering, lethargy, low heart rate, and unresponsiveness, bring your pet into a warm area, place a light blanket over them, and call your veterinarian.

Eliminate the possibility of poisoning. Unfortunately, dogs like the sweet taste of antifreeze, which can cause sickness or even death if ingested. Make certain that all antifreeze containers are well out of reach of dogs and thoroughly clean any spills immediately.

Limit outdoor exposure for older and arthritic pets. Escort the older dog outside for toileting and use a leash if the yard has ice or snow. Older dogs can easily fall and seriously injure themselves.

Keep your dog on a leash. Dogs rely heavily on a strong sense of smell to figure out where they are and can easily get lost during winter storms. Snow covering the ground will make their surroundings less familiar. Keeping your dog on a leash at all times – especially during winter storms – can help stop your dog from becoming lost. Also talk to your veterinarian about microchipping your dog, just in case.



Do not leave your dog inside of a parked car. Most people know this rule for the summer. But, in the winter it can act as an icebox and trap cold air inside.

To learn more about winter preparedness for your pets, visit: <http://www.pasart.us/Pages/Home.aspx>.



The Cold, Hard Facts

Fresh off the heels of the holiday season, we now move into the heart of winter. Often, we think of snow piling up or icy walkways as the typical winter hazards. But, cold weather can be just as dangerous. While most of us as Pennsylvanians understand we must deal with cold air over winter, periods of extreme cold can lead to problems across the board. From problems with keeping the house warm to power outages and plumbing issues, extreme cold can wreak havoc on an unprepared family. Extreme cold hazards can be mitigated though. Check out the tips below for more details.

Coldest Hour...

Typically, the coldest part of the day is during the pre-dawn hours into around sunrise at the start of a calm, newly snow-covered day. If wind is involved, the cold air can be dangerous at any time of the day. Wind driven cold can lead to hypothermia and frostbite in a matter of minutes during extreme cold.

Project Protect: People, Pets, Plants, & Pipes



People: Our elders, children, and those with illness may not be able to regulate body temperature well and can quickly be susceptible to the cold. Homeless, outdoor workers, and recreationists can fall victim to cold temperatures. Be sure to dress with multiple layers and cover all exposed body parts. Limit time outdoors. Check on neighbors regularly. Stay hydrated and well rested.

Pets: Animals have a limited tolerance to extreme cold over long periods of time. Limit time outdoors and keep food and water available. Protect pets with special clothing if needed.



Plants: While most plants at this stage of the year are hardy enough for outdoors, some may not be able to sustain extreme cold. Covering plants or moving to sheds or indoors can help plant health during long cold stretches.

Pipes: Make sure water pipes are well insulated. On extremely cold days, run a slow trickle of water to keep the pipes from freezing. If pipes freeze, don't use an open flame or heat gun to thaw frozen pipes, otherwise you may start a fire. Also, make sure vent pipes aren't blocked or covered with snow.



DO NOT run generators or gas heaters indoors. Do not use the oven to heat your home. Problems with using these methods include carbon monoxide poisoning or fires. When traveling, maintain at least a half tank of gas to keep you warm if you get stranded. If you have not yet, get your car tuned up and ready for a cold snap.

Oh! And don't forget the bread, milk, and eggs.... It is a Pennsylvania winter after all.

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pennsylvania

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

www.pema.pa.gov

Preparedness Events in January

2020 PA State Farm Show—January 4th through January 11th

(<https://www.farmshow.pa.gov/Pages/default.aspx>)

Are you Ready PA? Visit us at the Ready PA Booth at the 2020 PA Farm Show.
We are located in booth #250 in the Expo Hall.

Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service—January 20th

(<https://www.nationalservice.gov/serve-your-community/mlk-day-service>)

PLEASE NOTE: In early 2020, the Ready PA monthly newsletter is going digital! To make sure you continue to receive this monthly newsletter, please sign up at:

<https://www.ready.pa.gov/Pages/Subscribe.aspx>

Additional Resources

Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency: www.pema.pa.gov

Ready PA: www.ready.pa.gov

SERVPA: www.serv.pa.gov

Federal Emergency Management Agency: www.fema.gov

Office of the State Fire Commissioner: www.osfc.pa.gov

Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture: www.agriculture.pa.gov

Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection: www.dep.pa.gov

Pennsylvania Department of Transportation: www.penndot.gov

Pennsylvania Governor's Office of Homeland Security: www.homelandsecurity.pa.gov

Pennsylvania Insurance Department: www.insurance.pa.gov

Pennsylvania Office of Attorney General: www.attorneygeneral.gov

Pennsylvania State Police: www.psp.pa.gov

PA511Connect: www.511pa.com



The Science of Winter Road Treatments



Winter road treatment tactics depend on **temperature, precipitation type** and **traffic volume**. Salt isn't a silver bullet and may not be effective on every roadway.

The Basics

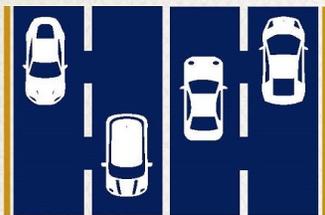


Less effective below 23-25 degrees

Most effective when crushed/spread by traffic

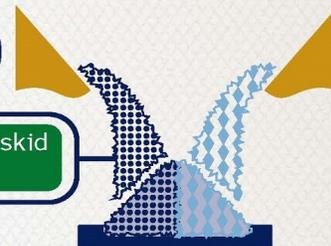


Salt Use and Road Types



Most effective with more traffic

Mixed with anti-skid or only anti-skid used on lower-traffic roads



When traffic is too low for salt to be effective, salt or salt/anti-skid mix is focused on hills, intersections sharp curves or freezing-prone areas

Salt and Temperature



Pre-wetting salt with salt brine can jump start melting, but is still most effective when pavement is 25 degrees or higher



On high-traffic roads, salt/anti-skid mix can be used when the road temperature is below 15 degrees



On low-traffic roads when the road temperature is below 15 degrees, falling snow is generally dryer and blows over the roadway, so salt is generally not used

More on winter operations and safety at PennDOT.gov/winter

#PAWinter



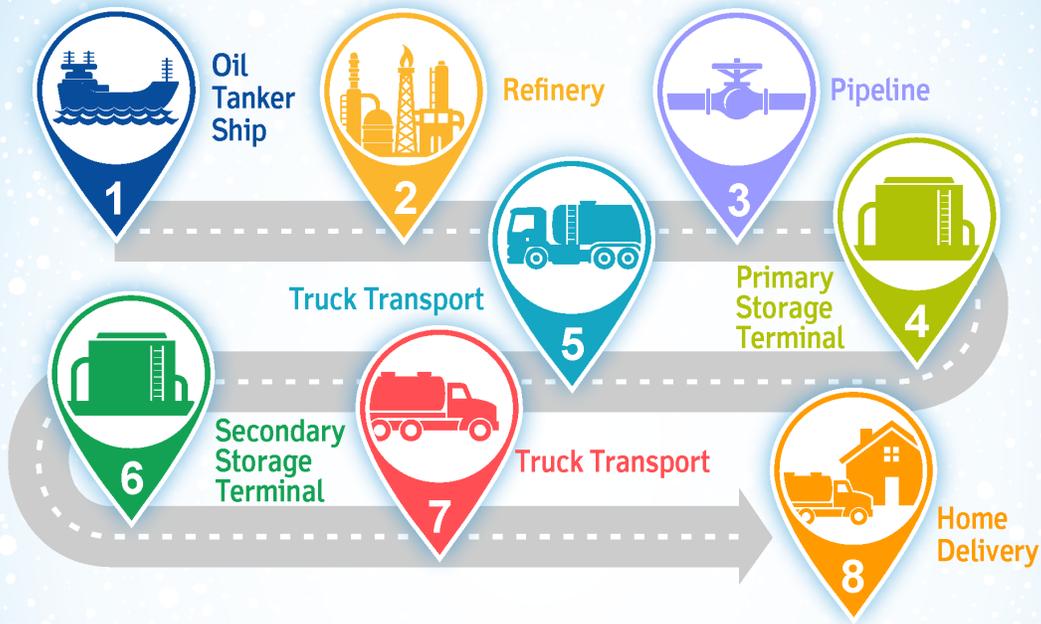


For a warm, safe winter Check Your Tank Regularly, Call for Delivery Early

Over 2.5 million Pennsylvania households rely on oil or propane for heat.

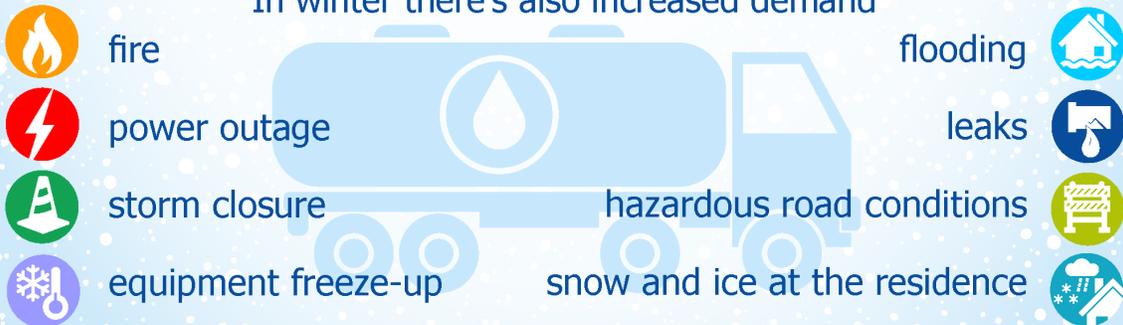
Did you know?

An oil or propane delivery typically travels many miles:



Factors that can slow delivery:

Not typical, but risk can increase in extreme weather
In winter there's also increased demand



**Avoid emergencies and higher fill-up costs:
Check your tank regularly and call for delivery early!**

