

PLOW ROUTE PRIORITIES

The Alcona County Road Commission is responsible for maintenance of over 700 miles of County roads and, under contract with the Michigan Department of Transportation, for 152 lane miles of State roads.

The 19-member truck driving crew is usually sufficient to handle the normal day to day maintenance of roads; however, winter maintenance is a different story. Obviously, plows cannot be everywhere at once, so a priority routing system has been developed with the roads with the highest traffic volumes and problematic areas getting the highest priority.

This means that US-23, a State highway carrying traffic thru Alcona County and connecting with larger commercial areas both north and south gets the very highest priority. US-23 is followed by M-72 and M-65, which are also State trunklines and carry large numbers of vehicles.

Next in line are the major County roads. Top priority is given to F-41, which spans the County from north to south, followed by F-30, which connects the county east and west. Spruce Road carrying traffic to US-23 from the Spruce and Hubbard Lake areas and Hubbard Lake Road carrying traffic north of M-72 to Spruce Road are also given a higher priority because of the traffic volumes.

Early attention is also given to a steep grade on Bamfield Road west of Glennie. Once M-65 is plowed, because the truck servicing M-65 carries salt, which effectively melts snow and ice to create a bare surface, the driver from that route heads west on Bamfield Road to treat the hill just east of the AuSable River with salt helping to reduce the hazards this steep incline has been known to cause motorists.

Later, the regularly-assigned driver will finish plowing Bamfield Road and other roads in the area. The regularly-assigned truck carries sand, which is applied to hills curves and intersections, as needed, to help with traction, but not to clear the road surface. This difference in the intention of keeping the large hill clear of snow and ice, along with the gap in timing, may often lead to the misperception that some sections of the road are being neglected.

The hills on Mt. Maria Road west of Hubbard Lake Road and on Hill Street off Mt. Maria Road, serving the residents on the western side of and the southern shore area of Hubbard Lake, respectively, are given priority because of the challenge the steep grades pose for motorists.

In general, plow trucks are called to duty on County routes whenever there is four or more inches of snow. Additionally, plow trucks will be called to action when conditions are deemed hazardous due to weather conditions.

Plow routes all have a starting point and an ending point and have been carefully planned to ensure the highest efficiency with the main roads getting taken care of first. This means roads with low-traffic volumes, especially if a storm is heavy or lengthy, may not see service until the second or third day following a storm.

Questions or concerns about snow plow routing or winter road maintenance issues, should be directed to the Alcona County Road Commission at 301 N. Lake Street, P.O. Box 40, Lincoln, Michigan 48742, by phone at 989-736-8168 or by e-mail at roads@alconacrc.com