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# Where Is My Plow?

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## Status of Incline Plow

See the status of plowing operations in Incline Village, Nevada. Rich can tell you more about [Red and Green Days for parking restrictions](#)  
[Learn More](#) »



## Washoe County Plow Routes Online

Map of unincorporated Washoe County snow removal plow routes and priorities.

To view:

- Select Layers & Tools by clicking on the three horizontal bars on the top, left side of the map.
- Scroll down to "Quick Maps & Themes" and select the "Snow Plow Routes" tab.

Learn more about our priority routes with [Rich and Sam](#).

Washoe County's roads serves 1,078 center lane miles divided into 34 snow and ice control routes. Routes are created utilizing geographic areas, neighborhoods, and are generally able to be plowed in an eight hour shift. Snow removal efforts take into consideration emergencies, school transportation, and our regions primary transportation artials. **The snow removal route categories are called Priority 1, Priority 2 and Priority 3 and are plowed in that order.**



## Regional Snow Plan

The regional snow plan provides additional details on our priorities and snow removal process. [Learn More »](#)

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# Snow and Ice Control Plan

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## Purpose

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Delivery of emergency snow response services to the citizens of Washoe County, and those who travel our streets during snowstorms, is a primary responsibility of the Community Services Department's Operations Division. The Division takes pride in performing this service in an efficient and effective manner, with an emergency snow response plan that is both proven and economical for normal winter weather in unincorporated Washoe County.

The goal of this plan is to provide fiscally responsible emergency response services during snow events, support the safety and mobility of our transportation system by plowing and treating county streets as efficiently as possible, keeping priority streets open and passable, and doing so with minimal disruptions to traffic.

The purpose of this plan is to establish our snow and ice control methods and procedures, and to ensure that all work is done in a safe, efficient, and environmentally sustainable manner. As a result of this planning effort, Washoe County residents will have priority streets that are safe and accessible.

Finally, because Truckee Meadows is considered a non-attainment area for air quality, the annual plan must be designed to meet the Washoe County Health District Air Quality Mandates.

## Background

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Washoe County's road inventory contains approximately 726 paved center lane miles and another 362 miles of gravel roads for a total of 1,088 center lane miles divided into 34 snow and ice control routes. Routes are created utilizing geographic areas and neighborhoods. Main roads are utilized as

boundaries whenever possible so that the two adjoining routes can plow the main roads helping to keep them clear.

The County's Snow & Ice Control Plan prioritizes these routes into 3 separate categories.

Priority 1 routes are identified as major arterial and collectors, major structures, overpasses, bridges, steep grades, school bus routes, emergency vehicle routes, fire station sites, schools, freeway feeder streets, and Regional Transportation (RTC) bus routes.

Next to be serviced are Priority 2 routes which are identified as secondary arterial, secondary collectors, residential roads, all remaining school, and bus routes.

All other streets fall into Priority 3 and include all unpaved routes, Cul-de-sacs, dead-ends, industrial streets, and County jogging/bicycle paths. Cul-de-sacs and dead-end streets are the last priority for two reasons, they generally contain fewer homes and due to the nature of their design there is no thru traffic to consider.

A [map](#) showing Washoe County's snowplow route priorities is available on the [Washoe Regional Mapping System](#).

Snow/ice control activities are staged out of these five maintenance yards: Longley Lane, Incline Village, North Valleys, Gerlach, and Vya. From these locations, crews are equipped and staffed to function independently to address the various snow routes. Information regarding our services can be found on our website at [www.washoecounty.gov/csd/operations/roads](http://www.washoecounty.gov/csd/operations/roads).

## Event Response

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From November through March, the County begins daily monitoring of weather forecasts to identify any approaching winter storms. Based on the forecast and experience of supervisory staff, resources needed for each individual storm is determined. Each storm is individually evaluated, and a pre-event action planning meeting is held if needed. Depending on the size, duration, and temperatures associated with a particular storm, crews may work alternative shifts to provide safe, efficient, and effective support for snow and ice control when and where it is needed. The Community Services Department Division Director is regularly kept apprised of pre-event action planning, especially when required resources exceed what's available to the County. It is difficult to set a standard crew start time for each storm because every storm has different characteristics. Factors considered include:

- Projected storm duration
- Intensity, which includes wind speeds and snowfall rates

- Day of the week and resulting impact on expected traffic volumes
- Temperature and type of precipitation (wet or dry snow)
- Projected start time
- Projected snow levels
- Area of probable impact

Additional factors that can delay snow response services during an event, and are considered in the planning phase include:

- Garbage pick-up day/area
- Placement of trash/recycle cans (out of roadway)
- Parked vehicles, trailers, or equipment
- Fallen trees
- Downed power lines
- Presence of pedestrians and pets
- Equipment failures

Note: Incline Village and Crystal Bay have a parking ordinance (70.425) that prohibits roadside parking during snow removal operations.

For each storm, a crew supervisor is on call 24 hours a day to monitor the forecasted storm activity. As the storm approaches, the supervisor begins to call crews into action as determined during the pre-event planning meeting. The Incline Village/Crystal Bay area has an employee living at the County's maintenance yard who monitors each storm in that region.

In general, experience has shown that for overnight snow events crews need to be on the road plowing by 3:00 am in the Truckee Meadows and at 4:00 am for Incline Village. This allows them to treat priority one roads and school bus routes prior to 7:00 am. Snow operations are most effective when the plows are out prior to commuter traffic which packs down the snow making it more difficult to remove. The goal is to have Priority 1 routes passable as soon as safely possible to lessen impacts to morning traffic. In the event of heavy continuous snow, Priority 2 and Priority 3 streets will not be cleared until the snow lets up allowing more attention to Priority 1 routes.

For snow events that begin during the day and last into the night hours, safety of the commute is of high importance. In general, staff may be held over from their day shift to work until 7:00 pm but the majority will be sent home after that time. The reason to send staff home is based on Commercial Driver's License requirements which by law, only allows working a 14-hour shift prior to taking a mandated 10-hour rest period. The rest period must be met for a possible 3:00 am or 4:00 am start time as discussed for overnight snow events. Again, these decisions are determined for each storm.

Weekend storm events are treated differently than weekday events. Generally, weekend storms are

treated with less urgency for Priority 1 routes due to not needing school routes to be cleared. This alters the operator's route slightly and may impact the actual time they need to treat an area. Weekend storms also involve additional hazards that need to be planned for including children sledding, residents clearing their driveways, and additional vehicles parked on the streets. All these items increase the time it takes to plow a route.

Note: County Ordinance 70.425 prohibits a person or snow removal business from placing snow upon any public highway, road, street, pedestrian path, bike path, or any portion of a road's right of way.

In case of heavy snow accumulation or a prolonged storm, crew supervisors and their crews will alternate their shifts if needed. Each crew will consist of 1 Supervisor and the necessary number of employees for that shift as determined by that storm's snow response plan. This rotation will continue until the required snow and ice control is completed. In the event the snow accumulation exceeds the County's ability to clear and maintain its roadways, the Community Services Department's Division Director will have the option to call on contractors to help in the clearing efforts. Priorities will be given to the routes with the most snow accumulations first and may be cleared to one-lane-in and one-lane-out only.

## Snow Removal Equipment

The following table shows the equipment available by area.

Area	Lane Miles	Type	Truck Plows	Loader Plows	Graders	Backhoes	Snow Blower	Sn
Truckee Meadows	568	Paved	20	2	0	2	0*	
	16	Dirt						
Incline	72	Paved	4	9	0	1	6**	
Gerlach/Vya	87	Paved	3	0	3	1	0	
	352	Dirt						

\*One small snow blower is available as needed from Incline

\*\*Consists of 4 loader mounted units, 1 truck mounted unit, and 1 small unit for pedestrian paths.

Washoe County Roads has a total available operator staff of 47 employees. Of the 47 employees, 6 are dedicated to Gerlach/Vya and 10 to Incline Village. All other staff members are utilized in the Truckee

Meadows and are deployed specific to each storm. During a snow and ice event, fleet mechanics are stationed at 3 maintenance facilities and are available 24 hours a day to support the snow and ice control operations. They complete various repairs and maintenance on snow removal equipment including frequent snowplow blade replacements.

## Sanding & Brining Procedures

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Our ice control material is a combination of either salt brine\*, straight salt, or a mixture of salt and sand. During sanding operations, a mixture of one part salt and three parts sand is utilized. Salt brine will be used as a pre-treatment for grades, bridges, and high-volume roadways to help assist in keeping these areas free from ice and snow. The individual operators determine when and where to best apply the material based on their training and professional experience.

### ***\*FAQs for Salt Brine***

#### ***What is the County spraying on the roadway?***

*It is brine. It's a mixture of water and salt and is applied to the roadway to prevent the snow from bonding to the road.*

#### ***Why are they spraying today? It's not snowing?***

*The brine can be applied up to seven days prior to a storm. When it dries in place the saturation from the new snow will reactivate it. We anticipate applying the brine solution during normal operating hours, 3-4 days prior to a predicted storm, which also helps to reduce overtime.*

#### ***Will brine hurt our vehicles or cause them to rust?***

*Washing or rinsing your vehicle of the brine solution after each storm event should reduce any effect on your vehicle.*

#### ***Why is brine being used?***

*Brine will significantly reduce the amount of snow that bonds to the roadway, which will allow the snow to be removed much easier resulting in a safer roadway. By applying brine, we are also reducing the amount of salt and sand that would typically be applied to the roadways.*

# Salt/Sand Staging Areas

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Washoe County has three main storage areas for deicing materials and works with regional partners such as the cities of Reno and Sparks, and Nevada Department of Transportation (NDOT) to access other stockpile sites as needed. A piece of equipment with loading capabilities will be located at each of these sites and is used for loading deicing materials into the trucks.

# Storm Clean-Up

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Because air quality in Washoe County has not met EPA Standards, the Washoe County Health District has mandated regulations to improve its air quality. These mandates affect how our snow and ice control program is conducted. The goal of this program is 1) to reduce the amount of sand spread on county streets for snow and ice control; 2) reduce the time required to sweep up sand after a storm event; and 3) use a harder sand material for its snow and ice control plan. By reducing the amount of sand utilized, the particulate matter (PM) entrained in the ambient air due to blowing winds, the roads drying out, and vehicles traveling over the sand will be reduced. After a storm event, street sweepers will be sent out to remove all applied salt/sand materials as expeditiously and safely as weather and road conditions permit. To comply with Washoe Health Regulation mandates, the County makes every effort to remove all salt/sand materials from its streets in a timely manner. The County currently has 9 street sweepers available. The number of street sweepers required will depend on the amount of salt/sand spread and the number of areas treated during a particular snowstorm event.

# Sand Reduction Methods Used to Help Comply with Mandates

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1. Utilizing brine pre-treatment.
2. Using electronic/computer monitored application equipment.
3. Annual calibration of snow and ice control equipment.
4. Employing an Enhanced Sweeping Strategy (removal within 4 days).

# Post Storm Procedures

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At the completion of the storm operators wash, grease, inspect, and perform various maintenance tasks on all snow and ice control vehicles and equipment. In the event of a malfunction or breakdown, the operator immediately notifies fleet management of the issue. This enables operators to have essential vehicles and equipment repaired and street worthy promptly and prior to the next storm event.