

VAN BUREN COUNTY ROAD COMMISSION

NEWS RELEASE

BETTER HIGHWAYS: SAVE LIVES, SAVE TIME, SAVE MONEY

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DATE: January 22, 2025	CONTACT: Bret Witkowski, Managing Director
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WE ALL SHARE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF KEEPING OUR ROADS, CHILDREN, AND DRIVERS SAFE!

THE ROAD COMMISSION WANTS YOU TO KNOW . . . During the winter months, the Van Buren County Road Commission performs many duties, but snow and ice control are the most noticeable. When you consider the working conditions, including visibility and traffic, they are also probably the most dangerous. That's why it is very important for residents, especially children and newly licensed drivers, to know what they can do to help snowplow operators.

Stay 200' away from an active snowplow - it's the law! For a point of reference, 200' is roughly comparable to 13 car lengths. The law also requires drivers to stop at least 20' away from a snowplow stopped at an intersection. This law was put in place because the areas behind snowplows are dangerous to be in. For the motorist there is decreased visibility in the area 200' behind the plow truck from the clouds of snow, not to mention increased stopping distance and other important driving safety issues. For our drivers, their visibility of you is also decreased by the same situations. In addition, they are constantly watching for people driving, residents shoveling driveways, children waiting for the bus or playing, animals, garbage cans, etc. all on top of driving while using all the buttons and switches necessary to do their job safely and effectively. We can all do our part by staying 200' away and giving the plows room to groom!

If you decide to pass a snowplow, do so on the left because passing on the right is illegal! Plows can be unpredictable - such as making wide turns or overlapping lanes. They also have "wing" plow blades to the right of the truck. A collision with a snowplow or the wing plow can be very dangerous, damaging, and costly. It may be shocking, but this has been an ongoing issue this winter. Our drivers are being regularly passed on both sides of the plow. This isn't safe for our drivers or motorists!

Winter maintenance vehicles use green lights to improve visibility. So, while motorists are used to green meaning go - in this case, green means slow down!

Don't build snow forts, make tunnels, or allow children to play in or on snowbanks next to roads. Our plow trucks and the snow being plowed off the road can cause a snow fort or tunnel to collapse causing a frighteningly dangerous situation. (This is one of our drivers' biggest fears!).

Keep well away from the edge of the roadway when waiting for the school bus, getting the mail, or watching the plow trucks. The snow being plowed can cause a frighteningly dangerous situation as it is HEAVY and is plowed with enough velocity to get the snow off the road.

Always keep sleds and toys away from the roadways.

Keep garbage cans up in the driveway if it snows on garbage collection day.

We all share the responsibility of keeping our roads, children, and drivers safe!