



## **INFORMATION ON SNOW REMOVAL AND DRIVING SAFETY**

During the winter months, snow removal is the primary responsibility of the La Plata County Road and Bridge Department. To keep over 600 miles of county roads clear, County Road and Bridge crews drive in excess of 1,500 miles for every winter snow storm. (This does not include state highways, such as 160, 550, 140, 151 and 172, any roads within municipalities or private roads.) Particularly during heavy snow storms, this can be a daunting task.

During the winter months, Road & Bridge teams are working or on call for work seven days a week. For snow removal and maintenance purposes, the County is divided into four districts, each with its own Road and Bridge crew or “team” typically with four persons each. County roads in the 100s are in District I (Marvel 970-588-3312), county roads in the 200s are in District II (Durango 970- 382-6421), county roads in the 300s are in District III (Ignacio 970-382-6426) and county roads in the 500s are in District V (Bayfield 970-382-6420). You can leave a message and we will address your concern as quickly as possible.

Please call dispatch at 970-385-2900 for any emergency such as a blocked county road. Dispatch will contact the correct county personnel in the area. For general questions, complaints or if you cannot reach the district in your area, you can reach the Road & Bridge Deputy or Superintendent at 970-382-6413. You may also contact us online at: [Repair Request Form R&B La Plata County, CO](#)

### **Snow Removal Priorities**

Our main county roads are vital to public safety and the smooth flow of traffic, and therefore, receive priority maintenance; these roads include County Roads 240, 501, 141, 210 and 310/318. During winter storms, many of our high-traffic paved roads are plowed and sanded several times a day, as conditions require. Gravel roads served by motor graders are generally plowed once per day. Low volume roads are not plowed until major roadways have been cleared. For additional information a “Snow Removal Priority Levels” map is posted on the County Road and Bridge web site.

The county road right-of-way averages 30 feet out each side from the centerline of the roadway. This area is needed for snow storage, drainage and signage. At times, it is necessary to plow snow well off the road into the right-of-way to make room for the next storm. **Homeowners and residents should be cautious about landscaping and placing objects in the right-of-way (such as mailboxes and trash containers), which could be damaged by snowplows or plowed snow. While snowplow drivers are careful to avoid contact with items in the right-of-way whenever possible, citizens are solely responsible for any damage which may result to mailboxes, trash containers or other items which are located in the County right-of-way and obstruct snowplows.** This is both a safety and efficiency issue: plowing your roads takes longer when snowplow drivers must work around obstructions. See this link for mailbox post design that allows adequate clearance for snowplow wings (pages 9-11): [Driveway & mailbox standards](#)

### **Parking & Driveways**

**Homeowners and residents are responsible for maintaining their own driveways and parking areas, but in doing so, should avoid plowing or blowing snow onto county roads. This is illegal and you could be fined.**

**Unfortunately, Road & Bridge cannot avoid plowing a berm at the edge of the county road and at the end of your**

**driveway as there are just too many miles to clear. It is your responsibility to clear this for your own access.**

Winter snow compounds parking problems for all; however, citizens must be aware that it is unlawful to park on county roads and county rights-of-way, if the parked vehicle obstructs snow removal activities. Cars parked or abandoned on the roadway and in rights-of-way make it nearly impossible to adequately clear snow from roads; therefore, parked or abandoned cars, which are an obstruction to County snowplows, may be towed at the owner's expense.

### **Driving Tips**

Motorists should exercise caution around snowplows. Do not follow the plow too closely and avoid driving in the snowplow operator's "blind spots" on the sides of the plow. Remember, not only are snowplow operators responsible for operating a very large piece of machinery, they are also negotiating the same snowy, icy roadway that you are traveling. If you pass a snowplow, make sure you have adequate time and space to pass safely.

Take the following precautions to ensure that you arrive at your destination safely:

- Leave early and allow more travel time on winter roads.
- Reduce your speed. Poor visibility, icy corners and heavy traffic may make it necessary for drivers to slow down.
- **Reducing your speed will also help with the maintenance of gravel roads. Excessive speed causes washboards & pot holes both in the winter and summer. Abiding by the speed limit will save your roads surface.**
- Prepare your vehicle properly, especially for mountain driving. Windshield wipers and tires should be checked and replaced as necessary. Inadequate visibility and poor traction are the cause of many accidents.
- Take a little extra time to clear the snow from your windshield and lights before driving. Make it easy for yourself to see and for others to see you.
- For updated Southwest Colorado highway conditions, call the Colorado State Patrol/State 511 line at 877-315-ROAD (7623) or visit [www.cotrip.org](http://www.cotrip.org).
- Be a patient and courteous driver