

Public Works Departments begins to clear snow

Written by gallupsun
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In a Jan. 8 post on Facebook the City of Gallup provided an update for citizens about the city's road conditions and the Public Works Department's efforts to clear them.

The Public Works Department will be plowing Priority 1 and Priority 2 roads today, Jan. 8. They will work on Priority 3 and 4 roads on Jan. 9. The city asks for the public's patience as drivers work to clear the roads.

When it snows, the City of Gallup Public Works Department has about 235 miles of roadways to keep clear. There are 12 employees who plow snow using four plow trucks. The snow plow drivers are only allowed to work one 12-hour shift each day, so the crew is split in half during active snowstorms.

Normally, the plows stay out until the storm has ended and the snow has been pushed back to the curb. If another storm is in the immediate forecast, the City will have four plows out at a time depending on the weather conditions. The overnight shift works at keeping the main roads and hills open.

Crews use a priority system to determine which roads to plow first. Priority One roads are plowed first, and those include those around schools, main arteries, hospital routes and hills. Priorities Two to Four will follow once the Priority One roads are cleared. The crews try to have all roads cleared within 10 hours. The first pass of the plow is to open the roads, then crews will go back and push the snow to the curb.

Salting starts when one inch of snow build up is present on the street, or in areas with steep streets, just before a major storm arrives. Salt is generally applied only on hills and at intersections. Snow plowing starts when two or more inches of snow accumulate on streets.

The City uses natural white salt and cinders for traction. When temperatures are below 20 degrees, the salt is not as effective. Crews must wait until the temperature rises or for the sun to come out for the salt to work.

TIPS TO STAY SAFE

- Park all vehicles, trailers, and boats off of streets until the snow is removed. Ridges of snow around vehicles parked on streets will freeze and prevent or slow down future snow removal and may cause accidents if hit by a vehicle.
- Clear snow from sidewalks as soon as possible, but no later than 48 hours after snow has ceased to fall. This is to prevent the snow from turning into an icy hazard for pedestrians or forcing them to walk in the street.
- Aim snow blowers into front yards away from sidewalks and the street. Ice and rocks, as well as powder snow, are blown out many feet. This material can hit parked or passing cars, which can cause damage to those vehicles as well as possible accidents. Also, snow blown onto the street will freeze and become a slick spot, which may cause accidents. Push snow shoved into driveways by snow plows onto the area between your sidewalk and curb but not into the street.
- Give salt spreaders and snow plows plenty of room. Don't follow too closely – equipment can slide sideways or backwards at any time. This will prevent cracked windshields and avoid accidents.
- Drive cautiously and defensively. Salt trucks will generally only be used on hills and intersections. Other areas will remain icy. **SLOW DOWN!** Do not follow closely.
- Streets that have speed humps will not be plowed, slated or cindered. This is due to speed humps causing damage to the spreader on the snow plows.

