

# Winter Weather

## 2013 - 2014

Let's be ready together



### When Storms are Headed Our Way – We're Preparing

We will plow major streets. They are the streets that are most important for getting to major public institutions such as hospitals and schools, the streets that are most frequently used by police, fire trucks and buses, and streets leading to Seattle's major employers. We do not plow non-arterial streets.

- \* We start preparing for winter in the summer: training staff, calibrating equipment and working with local agency partners.
- \* When high winds or heavy rain are forecast, our crews are ready to remove fallen trees from the road, and to repair signs and signals.
- \* Our supplies of salt and liquid anti-icer are ready to help keep ice from forming on main city streets and bridges.

### Winter Storms - Here's Our Plan

In Seattle, winter can bring heavy rain, high winds, ice and snow. We're monitoring conditions.

- \* Our staff follows weather reports 24 hours a day, all year long, with a direct line to the National Weather Service and live Doppler radar feeds.
- \* We use a forecasting tool developed with the University of Washington called SNOWWATCH to learn how a storm will most likely affect different neighborhoods. This information helps determine where the crews will be needed first.
- \* Computerized sensors located on city bridges, and also ground surface sensors, provide timely and accurate air and roadway surface temperatures.
- \* We use real-time, live-streaming cameras to see actual conditions on key streets. You can see the camera views on SDOT's website, [www.seattle.gov/travelers](http://www.seattle.gov/travelers).

### The City of Seattle takes a proactive approach, using best practices to respond to snow and ice:

- \* SDOT crews use trucks fitted with plows and salt-spreaders to keep major streets clear.
- \* Before the snow starts falling, the crews pre-treat key streets and bridges with anti-icer to help prevent ice from forming.



- \* As the snow begins to fall, the crews continue to drive their routes, treating the roadway with salt where needed. When approximately one inch of snow has accumulated, they begin plowing.
- \* During a snow event, a Global Positioning Satellite (GPS) system tracks the locations of the trucks. A map on SDOT's website shows where the trucks are at the current time and also which streets the trucks have already serviced. During a storm you will be able to see the map on our website at [www.seattle.gov/sdot/winterweathermap](http://www.seattle.gov/sdot/winterweathermap).



### Winter Storms - Be a Good Neighbor

You are part of the team too! Your participation and awareness can help.

- \* Clear the sidewalk and nearby street drains of leaves. Place your leaves in a yard waste container, not in the street.
- \* When snow falls, shovel and de-ice your sidewalk. You can use salt like we do. Children, senior citizens and your mail carrier will appreciate your effort. If you have elderly neighbors, consider clearing theirs. If everyone does, sidewalks will be open to reach the store and bus stop.
- \* Clear your garbage carts of snow and ice. It makes pickup easier and more efficient.
- \* Snowplows will usually push snow to the side of the road, so you may need to remove the extra snow from your driveway. Also, if you park on a snowplow route, you may need to dig your car out.
- \* Businesses and building managers should shovel sidewalks and bus stops outside their locations so customers and employees can get around.

### When the Storms Hit—We Have a Plan

SDOT works closely with King County Metro Transit, the Seattle School District, local universities, hospitals and major employers to ensure our snow-fighting work maintains mobility for people and goods, and access to the region. The attached snow map shows where we focus our snow-fighting efforts. Those streets will be treated with de-icer and plowed when the storm hits. Now is a good time to plan routes to get to work, the grocery store, child care and medical appointments.

### What You Can Do During Winter Storms

- \* Know the snow routes.
- \* Listen to the weather forecast. Have a plan in case severe weather strikes.
- \* Make sure you have a snow shovel and salt or a de-icer product to clear your driveway and sidewalks.
- \* When the storm hits, don't drive if you don't have to. Fewer cars on the street during and after a storm make it easier and safer to clear streets.
- \* Use the bus. SDOT works closely with Metro Transit to ensure bus routes are passable.
- \* If you must drive, make sure your car is ready. Carry chains and be prepared to put them on. Make sure windows are clear and the snow is brushed from the entire car.
- \* Slow down and allow plenty of room between you and the next vehicle. Be prepared for ice you cannot see, especially on bridges and raised roadways.
- \* Watch for and respect Street Closed signs. They are placed by the police for your safety.

### SDOT Websites with Useful Information

SDOT's winter weather website including links to maps:  
<http://www.seattle.gov/transportation/winterweather.htm>

Live streaming cameras with views of major streets  
[www.seattle.gov/travelers](http://www.seattle.gov/travelers)



## FOR ASSISTANCE AND INFO

### **Transit Rider Information**

**King County Metro Transit Rider Information**  
(206) 553-3000  
<http://www.kingcounty.gov/metro>

### **Community Transit**

(425) 353-7433 (RIDE)  
<http://www.communitytransit.org>

### **Pierce Transit**

(253) 581-8000  
<http://www.piercetransit.org>

### **Sound Transit**

1 (888) 889-6368  
<http://www.soundtransit.org>

### **Amtrak**

1 (800) 872-7245  
<http://www.amtrak.com>

### **Schools**

Listen to local radio and television stations for information on school closures and schedule changes. Check the Internet, <http://www.seattleschools.org> and also Twitter @seapubschools. Please be sure to keep the snow and ice information that your local school distributes.

### **Alternative Languages**

Information in Languages other than English  
<http://www.seattle.gov/transportation/winterweather.htm>

### **Street Maintenance**

**Seattle Department of Transportation**  
(206) 684-7623 (ROAD)

### **Follow SDOT on Twitter and Facebook and read the On the Move Blog**

<http://www.seattle.gov/transportation>

### **King County Road Services Division**

Road Maintenance (206) 296-8100  
<http://www.kingcounty.gov/transportation/kcdot/roads>

### **Suburban Cities**

Call the public works or roads department located in your city.

### **Power Outages**

**Seattle City Light**  
(206) 684-7400  
<http://www.seattle.gov/light>

### **Puget Sound Energy**

1 (888) 225-5773  
<http://www.pse.com>

### **Highway & Ferry Conditions**

**Washington State Department of Transportation**  
Road conditions for state routes, call 511  
<http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/traffic>

### **Washington State Ferry Information**

Statewide dial 511  
In Seattle (automated) (206) 464-6400  
<http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/ferries>



## What the Map Shows

(Please see the attached map on two pages, the north half and the south half of the city.)

SDOT's snow routes show the level of service planned for each street, not which streets will be plowed first. We will provide the highest level of service to the most significant streets within the City of Seattle that are maintained by the city. The state maintains I-5 and several bridges in Seattle. These streets were selected because they are the busiest streets that connect Seattle's neighborhoods with downtown and the greater Puget Sound region. They are the streets that are most important for getting to major public institutions such as hospitals and schools, the streets that are most frequently used by police, fire trucks and buses, and streets leading to Seattle's major employers. During a citywide snow storm, SDOT's strategy is to treat streets of both levels of service at the same time to keep traffic moving.

Remember, SDOT does not plow non-arterial streets.

## Levels of Service

The attached map shows the different classifications of snow routes called gold and emerald.

**Gold Snow Routes:** These are streets of regional importance for hospitals, buses, large trucks and major employers. SDOT's objective is to provide bare and wet pavement over all travel lanes within 12 hours of a significant lull in the storm.

**Emerald Snow Routes:** These are streets of citywide importance for hospitals, buses and general traffic. SDOT's objective is to provide bare and wet pavement for one lane in each direction within 12 hours of a significant lull in the storm.

## Coordination with the Bus System

SDOT and King County Metro Transit have worked carefully to make sure that SDOT's snow routes meet the needs of the transit-riding public. The snow routes include the streets that Metro buses use when it snows.

## Other Streets

There are some streets that SDOT crews will not be able to plow or treat with salt. These are the lesser traveled streets, and streets on hills that often become unsafe for the public and for SDOT trucks during periods of ice and snow.

Our crews know which steep streets often become unsafe for driving when it snows. The crews store Street Closed signs on the sidewalks at the corners of these streets at the beginning of winter so they will be available when needed to close the streets. When Seattle Police Officers decide a street is unsafe for driving, they move the Street Closed signs into the middle of the road.

For your safety, it is important to obey the Street Closed signs even if a street looks safe to you. There may be ice under the snow, or there may be a trouble spot beyond your view.





**Snow/Ice Service Level**

-  GOLD  
All travel lanes bare and wet
-  EMERALD  
One lane in each direction bare and wet



Lake Washington

Elliott Bay

Downtown

