



COUNTY OF KENOSHA

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Winter driving reminder: Snowplows require extra room to operate

With another winter driving season already upon us, the Kenosha County Division of Highways reminds motorists to use extra caution when driving near snowplows.

Furthermore, drivers should consider staying off roadways whenever possible when winter storms make travel treacherous.

“When you’re driving behind a snowplow, it’s important to remember that these are large, heavy pieces of equipment that need extra room to operate,” said Clement Abongwa, Kenosha County highway director. “If you’re traveling too close to the back of a plow, the driver cannot see that you’re there.”

Wisconsin statute 346.915 requires drivers to stay at least 200 feet behind a snowplow engaged in snow/ice removal upon any highway with a posted speed limit of more than 35 mph. Violators may receive a \$175 fine and an assessment of three driver’s license demerit points.

Being involved in a crash can lead to far more serious consequences. Since 2008, there have been 3,459 snowplow crashes in Wisconsin, resulting in 571 injuries and five fatalities, according to data from the Wisconsin State Patrol.

“Our snowplow drivers are out on the road in all conditions to make our roadways passable and safe for all,” Abongwa said. “You can aid in that process by keeping a reasonable following distance behind trucks, and by staying off the road altogether if you don’t need to travel during winter storms.”

The State Patrol offers the following winter travel tips:

- Before your trip, check the 511 travel information system for the latest updates about road conditions and possible incidents. This information is available online at <https://511wi.gov> or by dialing 511 or 866-511-9472.
- During severe winter storms, postpone your trip if possible. Stranded motorists and vehicles become hazards that interfere with snow removal efforts.

- If you must travel: Buckle up, turn on your low-beam headlights, slow down, and allow extra time and following distance (at least 200 feet behind a working snowplow).
- If you must pass, be careful. Snowplows often create a cloud of snow that can obscure vision. Road conditions in front of the plow are often worse.
- Don't be over-confident if you drive a four-wheel or all-wheel-drive vehicle. They still require a considerable distance to stop on slick roadways.

More tips on safe winter driving – including things to consider if you become stranded, winter vehicle maintenance and how to prepare an emergency winter travel kit – are available on the Wisconsin Department of Transportation's website, at <https://wisconsindot.gov/Pages/safety/education/winter-drv/default.aspx>.

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