

Wintry weather brings safety reminders

Winter, my friends, is kicking into gear at the Lake of the Ozarks. Mother Nature is fickle and according to the weather people we're either in for some rain – or a mixture of snow and ice.

Regardless, it's time for a refresher on how the City of Lake Ozark handles these types of events. We know we'll get some wintry weather sometime in the next four months.

Slippery roads can pose a challenge to snow removal crews at the City of Lake Ozark, but residents can help improve safety and help Street Department personnel clear the roads as quickly and safely as possible.

Preston Duncan, Street Department foreman, says his crew starts about 24-48 hours ahead of a forecasted snow/ice event to prepare the snowplows and sanders. Employees work split shifts to make sure equipment is on the road all hours of the day when necessary plowing and spreading a mixture of sand and specially treated salt. Magnesium chloride is added to the mixture to lower the effective temperature at which the ingredients will work.

Regular salt and sand are effective to about 22-25 degrees. Adding the magnesium chloride actually lowers the effectiveness to about 15 degrees.

Crews focus on the main arterial roads within the city first so emergency crews can respond more quickly. The side streets are a second priority.

Road crews face all types of situations from deteriorating roads, to broken and damaged equipment to irate motorists and residents. They do their best under the circumstances.

Years of experience and seeing all types of situations have prompted Duncan to offer some suggestions for the safety of residents and city employees. He urges everyone to consider the situation before making rash decisions.



It won't be long until we begin seeing sights like this along City of Lake Ozark streets.

Some helpful winter driving tips

- When possible, don't drive until streets are cleared.
 - Park your vehicle off the street as far as possible. This will leave room for plows to adequately remove the snow and will avoid your vehicle being covered in the salt and sand mixture.
 - Motorists should stay a safe distance – 50 feet or more -- from a plow or sander. You need room to stop in case the snowplow stops or slows.
 - Try not to park in blind spots or on curves. It's often difficult for snowplow drivers to see at night and during falling snow.
 - Talk to your neighbors about choosing one side of the road or the other to park on. A snowplow snaking through streets only makes it more difficult for everyone after the snow event is over.
 - Keep your children and pets away from the sides of the streets during snow events for their safety. Falling or blowing snow can impair a snowplow operator's vision.
 - If you really need to walk or run in the streets to exercise, please do so against the flow of traffic. Wear proper gear including reflective gear or carry a flashlight at night.
 - If you have to scoop your driveway before the snowplow passes, scoop it side to side rather than onto the street. A passing snowplow will only push the snow you've just scooped back onto your driveway.
 - After the weather improves, check your mailboxes and trash containers. Many illegally located at the road's edge on public easement have been damaged or destroyed by a passing plow or the snow thrown by the plow.
 - When the roads are slick for you, they are slick for snowplows as well. Please keep that in mind.
- Remember: the city's intent is to clear your street as quickly, adequately and safely as possible. You can help.