



BONNER COUNTY

Road & Bridge Department

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Hello Bonner County Drivers – As the clouds begin to gather after a remarkably beautiful October, we are confronted with our annual conundrum, “Are we going to be ready for winter driving on our local rural roads?” Winter road maintenance is expensive, hazardous for operators and time consuming. Bonner County spent nearly \$2,000,000 last winter providing safer roads. Please remember to make sure you have winter tires on your rig and that County roads are not maintained 24 hours a day. Hopefully, this winter is not as early and persistent as last winter was.

Mailboxes in county road rights-of-way suffer greatly from snow plowing activity and are the responsibility of the owner. Most people underestimate the weight of snow being pushed from the road, so if you can wiggle your mailbox, there is a fair probability that plowed snow will take it down. County operators do not intentionally damage mailboxes, but maintain speed to throw snow from the road. The growing number of garbage cans placed for pickup within the right of way must be kept out of the plowed travel surface because they will end up in the ditch and create an unsightly mess that individuals are responsible for.

Snow plowing commences after several inches have accumulated on roadways. Bonner County Road & Bridge operates three districts to maintain 680+ miles of road, but all adhere to these priorities for our winter maintenance:

1st Priority School bus routes, arterials and major collectors

2nd Priority All other county maintained roads after 1st Priority roadways

3rd Priority Sanding generally begins after plowing a road is completed. Sand is applied to steeper roadway grades, at intersections, on bridges, and other areas determined to be hazardous. It is not standard policy to sand straight stretches of roadway because of snow. Road salt is not used.

Residents who remove snow from their driveways are reminded that **Idaho Code 18-3906 prohibits placing snow or ice on any public road in a manner that impedes traffic or makes it unsafe and 18-3907 prohibits the placing of snow in any manner that affects the water flow of a ditch line.** If your snow plowing affects the County’s plowing or anyone driving the road, you are breaking the law.

YOU CAN HELP

There are several ways the public can help make the County's job more cost effective and safe:

- Vehicles must not be parked on roadways during snow events. Vehicles will be buried in the snow berm and/or towed if interfering with the plow route. Once bermed in, it is the resident's responsibility to shovel their vehicle out. Please remember – our roads are not city streets!
- Landscape features such as rocks, fences or planters should be removed from the rights-of-way for the winter. They may be destroyed by snow plowing, but they also can do substantial damage to snow plows. Owners are responsible for County equipment unnecessarily damaged.
- Do not push snow over ends of culverts or drainage structures. Rapid warming cycles in winter could result in overloaded ditches being unable to drain. Local flooding could occur.
- **Mailboxes are damaged during snow removal operations. Replacement of damaged mailboxes is the responsibility of the property owner/resident per the Bonner County Road Standards Manual, Section 8.**
- Snow removal operations require the use of large and heavy equipment during periods of darkness usually accompanied by limited visibility caused by falling snow. Bonner County operators are trained and safety is stressed at all times. Drivers of automobiles should follow at a safe distance where the operator can see you in his mirrors.
- Children love to watch the large equipment, noise, lights and activity of snow removal operations. Please keep children a safe distance away. The concentration required for snow removal, means the operators may not always be able to see people close by and accidents could result.
- Please encourage children **NOT** to build tunnels, forts or play in snow berms.

Information on the Road & Bridge website, <https://www.bonnercountyid.gov/departments/roadbridge> may help residents be proactive in securing their mailboxes and safeguarding articles placed in the County-Right-of-Way. We want everyone to have a safe and secure winter.

For further information, please call the Bonner County Road & Bridge Department at 208 255-5681, ext. 1; Monday through Friday, 7am to 4pm.

Steve Klatt, Director