



MEDIA RELEASE

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Knox County's Highway Department Ready for Winter Weather

KNOXVILLE, Tenn. – Knox County Engineering & Public Works continues to prepare its fleet of heavy equipment ahead of possible winter weather this week and next. On-call crews remain ready in each service district to begin treating roadways as needed.

“When it rains ahead of a snow event, like it did on Christmas Eve, we can’t pre-treat the roads because the solution all gets washed away,” said Senior Director of Engineering and Public Works Jim Snowden. “In drier situations, like we’ve had this week, it’s a lot easier to be prepared.”

Knox County Mayor Glenn Jacobs agreed: “Luckily, our road crews are ready to get out and get to work when they need to. It isn’t ideal when lots of rain comes before the snow, but we are grateful for the hard work these crews always do to keep the rest of us safe!”

Knox County has approximately 4,000 tons of road salt (which helps to melt ice and snow) and 5,000 gallons of calcium chloride (which is used to maintain the effectiveness of granular salt in extremely cold conditions) in storage and ready to use. The county also has 30,000 gallons of salt brine, a salt and water mixture that is applied to roadways to stop snow from sticking to pavement. The brine system allows Knox County’s Highway Department to pre-treat 1,392 lane miles of primary and secondary roads, and other known trouble spots, ahead of a winter storm.

Prior to and during any winter precipitation, the on-call supervisors monitor road conditions in the county and communicate with authorities to determine necessary precautions, coming into work as early as 3 a.m. some days.

The Highway Department can equip up to 14 trucks with brine spreaders, which can be switched out with equipment to spread granular road salt. Knox County has 17 snowplows that can be attached to dump trucks as needed. Depending on the severity of the weather, the county also has 12 four-wheel-drive trucks that can be equipped with smaller snowplows for use on more narrow roads.

During winter storms, residents should stay off the roads whenever possible until crews have cleared the snow. Workers will start clearing main thoroughfares and known problem areas first before moving on to complaints and secondary roads.

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