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Knox County's Highway Department Ready for Winter Weather

KNOXVILLE, Tenn.— 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. As of now, crews cannot pre-treat roads because the rain will wash away the brine and salt.

Knox County Engineering & Public Works will be in around 9 p.m. this evening to prep the fleet of heavy equipment ahead of snow accumulation expected by the National Weather Service to start around 2 a.m. On-call crews are ready in each service district to begin treating roadways as needed.

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.

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

The County also has approximately 4,000 tons of road salt, 5,000 gallons of calcium chloride, and 30,000 gallons of salt brine ready for use. Road salt helps to melt ice and snow. Calcium chloride is used to maintain the effectiveness of granular salt in extremely cold conditions. Salt brine is a mixture of salt and water that is applied to roadways to stop snow from sticking to pavement. The brine system allows Knox County's Highway Department to pre-treat 1,718 lane miles of primary and secondary roads, and other known trouble spots, ahead of a winter storm.