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City of Columbus

What's What in Winter

The City of Columbus prioritizes snow and ice-control efforts in four levels and addresses the most heavily traveled roads first along with streets necessary for emergency vehicles. Roads are prioritized as:

- 1: Freeway system
- 2: Arterial streets, e.g., High, Broad, Morse, Cleveland, Livingston
- 3: Collector residential streets, e.g., Oakland Park, Hague, Courtright
- 4: Residential streets

Residential streets are plowed after four inches of snow have fallen.

Ice cannot be plowed.

Salt, calcium chloride, brine and sand are used to treat snow and ice. Salt and calcium chloride melt snow and ice under most conditions but lose effectiveness in extremely low temperatures.

Brine is a mixture of salt and water and employed as a pre-treatment to help prevent snow and ice from bonding to pavement. Brine can be applied as much as three days before snow and ice is anticipated, but rain will wash brine away.

The City of Columbus has six salt barns, with total capacity of 30,000 tons. We used 26,109 tons during the winter of 2008-09, which had 23.2 inches of snow.

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More than 110 Department of Public Service equipment operators and support personnel form the primary team known as the *Snow Warriors* for treating snow and ice. The support staff indoors includes laborers, dispatchers and traffic-management specialists.

The *Snow Warriors* are backed up by more than 45 equipment operators from other city departments who have been cross-trained and are on call around the clock. Private contractors are brought in only after the heaviest snow events and blizzards.

Weather prediction tools used include The Weather Channel, National Weather Service, National Oceanic & Atmospheric Association weather radar, meteorologists and Web sites including www.buckeyetraffic.com from the Ohio Department of Transportation.

Snow emergencies are declared by the Franklin County Sheriff; telephone (614) 462-3333.

Snow emergencies can also be declared by the Mayor of Columbus. Information and updates are available through the city's Snow Line (614) 645-SNOW [7669].

There are usually between 25 and 50 separate snow events and an average of 24 inches of snowfall annually in Columbus.

Seventy-five percent of snow generally falls after January 1 and fifty percent after January 25.

Columbus has 227 square miles of land area and an average snowfall of 24 inches. Cleveland has 82 square miles and about 55 inches per year. Toledo's numbers are 80 square miles and 36 inches, and Cincinnati has 79 square miles and 16 inches.

The City of Columbus is responsible for more than 2,053 linear miles of streets, roughly the distance between Columbus and Las Vegas.

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Tips for Safer Mobility in Winter

- Avoid driving during storms if possible
- Drive no less than 100 feet behind plow trucks
- Be prepared for sudden stops and movements from plow trucks
- Avoid passing plow trucks; snow equipment drivers may not see you
- Follow snow-emergency laws and parking restrictions
- Park vehicles in driveways and off streets, if possible, to provide room for plows and salt trucks
- Shovel your sidewalks, driveway aprons, wheelchair ramps and areas around mailboxes
- Pile snow in yards, not on streets, catch basins and sidewalks
- Clear snow from sewer and stormwater drains to prevent flooding after snow melts
- Apply salt, sand or kitty litter on icy steps and paths

Residents can contact the **City of Columbus 311 Service Center** to learn where their street falls in the city's plans for plowing or salting. Telephone 311 or (614) 645-3111, or send e-mail to 311@columbus.gov.

Important Telephone Numbers

City of Columbus 311 Service Center	311 or (614) 645-3111
City of Columbus Snow Line	(614) 645-7669
City of Columbus Police – emergency	911
City of Columbus Police – non-emergency	(614) 645-4545
Ohio Department of Transportation	(614) 466-7170
Ohio Highway Patrol	(877) 7-PATROL
American Automobile Association	(800) 222-4357
Central Ohio Transit Authority	(614) 228-1776
American Electric Power	(800) 277-2177
Columbia Gas	(800) 344-4077
Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission	(888) 742-7433
Paving the Way	(614) 645-PAVE