

# Truckee Meadows Winter Preparedness Guide





# An Emergency Preparedness Message From Your Local Emergency Managers

"Preparedness is the best response to unforeseen emergencies". As individuals and as a community, we must be ready to handle unexpected emergencies, whether they are severe storms, floods, earthquakes, terrorism or other disasters. You can feel confident that your emergency managers and government are doing all we can to stay prepared...and the same should be true of you and your family.

Our on-going "Be Ready" campaign stresses that knowing what to do is your best protection, as well as your personal responsibility. The THREE steps you can take now, well in advance of an emergency are: 1) make a plan, 2) assemble a kit and 3) stay informed.

**Make an Emergency Plan:** Decide how you will contact friends, family and co-workers, where you will go and what you will do. It may be easier to make a long-distance phone call than to call across town. Text messages are more reliable than phone calls when lines are bogged down. Designate an out-of-town contact. Be sure everyone knows the number. Designate meeting places within and outside of your immediate neighborhood.

**Assemble a Kit:** Most emergency planning experts suggest having enough supplies to last you and your family for three to five days. Keep the items that you would most likely need in one easy-to-carry container such as a plastic storage bin, backpack or duffel bag. Store it in a convenient place in your home and put a smaller version in your car. Check your supplies and re-think your needs every six months. Each person will require a gallon of water per day. Consider the special needs of disabled family and any pets. Always keep your gas tank half full in case of evacuation. Include a portable radio with extra batteries to receive emergency instructions.

**Stay Informed:** If an emergency occurs...DO NOT PANIC. Listen for instructions from your local authorities. Getting official information during an emergency is vital to your safety. Local officials will ensure that information is sent to emergency alert radio stations as well as television and local government websites. Your civil alert emergency radio will need to be tuned into KKOH-AM 780, which is "primary relay station number one" for northern Nevada. It will receive and relay any alerts or tests to you. Do not call 911 for non-emergency calls. You may be directed to follow one of two courses of action: shelter in place or evacuate:

- Shelter in Place: means protecting yourself by staying where you are until given further instructions or the all-clear.
- Evacuation: means leaving the area that is affected by the potential hazard such as an industrial chemical accident or a fire.

Remember, it is everyone's responsibility to plan, prepare and practice for emergencies that may affect our region.

From left to right:

Gary Dunn, Sparks Emergency Management Administrator

Aaron Kenneston, Washoe County Emergency Management Coordinator

Frank Siracusa, Chief, Division of Emergency Management, Nevada Department of Public Safety

Ed Atwell, University of Nevada, Reno, Emergency Manager

Chris Smith, Washoe County School District Emergency Manager



# Truckee Meadows Winter Preparedness G u i d e

## Snow Plow Operators Need Your Help! Help!

Here are a few tips from the area's snow removal professionals on how you can assist them in removing snow from the region's roadways during the winter months.

- It is important to remember large equipment and trucks have blind spots, if you can't see the operator in their mirror; they can't see you. Stay back at least 100 feet.
- Snow removal equipment frequently back up, move erratically and may stop suddenly, give them plenty of room.
- Do not shovel or blow snow into the roadway, in most cases it's against the law and it adds to the amount of time an operator has to spend on your street.
- Do not place garbage cans in the roadway; the cans should be placed in the driveway to avoid damage from snow removal equipment.
- It is a good idea to wait until you have seen the equipment make at least two passes clearing snow on your side of the street before you remove the berm from your driveway.
- Snow removal operators have a priority plan they follow: Priority 1 – main arteries and school bus routes and Priority 2 – collector streets.
- Park vehicles off the roadway and out of cul-de-sacs if possible, it is very difficult for snow removal equipment to maneuver in tight places.
- Do not use off road vehicles such as Snowmobiles and ATV's on roadways when equipment is in the area removing snow and sanding.
- If you don't need to leave your home during a storm event, please stay home. It will reduce the chances of an accident and make it easier to get the job done.



And remember, snow removal is a very difficult job. The operators deal with long hours, traffic, night shifts, driving in severe weather conditions, so please be as courteous and friendly as you can.

*Regional Snow Plow Operators from left to right Jake Reed with the City of Sparks, John Shipton with NDOT, Jim Tresley with Washoe County and Nat Thomas with the City of Reno.*





# Truckee Meadows Winter Snow & Ice Control Information

	Roadway Network		Personnel		
	Lane Miles	Priority I Lane Miles	Snow Personnel	Years Of Combined Service	Snow Removal Man Hours
<b>Nevada-DOT</b>	794	794	69ft, 17 tmp	657	24,000
<b>Washoe Co.</b>	1,114	306	57	641	6,182
<b>City of Reno</b>	2,193	745	60	455	7,498
<b>City of Sparks</b>	665	380	37	287	2,477
<b>Regional Totals</b>	4,766	2,225	240	2,040	40,157

	Equipment				
	Dump Trucks w/ Plow-Sander	Front-end Loaders	Motor Graders (Blades)	Rotary Snow Blowers	ATV's/Bobcats
<b>Nevada-DOT</b>	42	11	4	6	1
<b>Washoe Co.</b>	23	3	4	1	0
<b>City of Reno</b>	23	4	0	0	2
<b>City of Sparks</b>	10	2	0	0	3
<b>Regional Totals</b>	98	20	8	7	6

Note: Truckee Meadows Water Authority supports emergency snow & ice control with 25 employees, 4 trucks and 5 pieces of heavy equipment.

	Materials Used During An Average Season		Material Storage		
	Sand/Salt Mixture (cu.yds)	Brine (Gallons)	Material Sites	Sand/Salt (cu.yds.)	Brine
<b>Nevada-DOT</b>	3,743	128,963	5	8,000	28,000
<b>Washoe Co.</b>	4,098	0	6	2,600	0
<b>City of Reno</b>	4,356	0	4	5,000	0
<b>City of Sparks</b>	1,243	0	3	1,400	0
<b>Regional Totals</b>	13,440	128,963	18	17,000	28,000

<b>Washoe Co. School District</b>	Equipment				
	Small Loaders	Loader/Back Hoes	Bobcat	Trucks w/ Snow Plows	
	10	2	1	6	
	Personnel				
	Truck Drivers/ Loader Operators	Grounds Maintenance	Equipment Operator	Small Engine Mechanic	High School Grounds Keepers
	2	9	1	1	21

### Cooperative Snow Removal Agreement

An inter-local agreement between Washoe County, City of Reno, City of Sparks, Washoe County School District and Truckee Meadows Water Authority, in association with the Nevada Department of Transportation, provides effective snow removal in the Truckee Meadows during declared Snow Emergencies. With local agencies having the ability to pool resources and work across jurisdictional boundaries, the continuation of emergency services and public safety operations on designated snow routes during emergency snow events is greatly improved.

The agreement also promotes further snow removal advances through cross-training and sharing of snow removal techniques and operations.



Managers and Supervisors from Northern Nevada regional governments work together to update the Emergency Snow Route Map.

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## Win Winter Driving Tips From Your Local Law Enforcement Agencies

For those of you that have lived in or spent much time in the State of Nevada, you are aware that the weather can change from sunshine to snow in less than an hour. Driving in poor weather requires that we modify our normal everyday driving habits to avoid being involved in an accident. Particular attention must also be paid to your surroundings, mainly pedestrians, who are in a hurry to get out of the poor weather and are wearing dark and bulky clothing which diminishes their view of you, and makes it harder for you to see them. This is of particular concern in school zones and the surrounding areas where students are trying to get to class.



Sparks Snow Plow Operator, Nick Diaz clearing the roads.

What is seen as the leading cause of accidents during poor weather conditions are vehicles traveling too fast for the conditions of the roadway being traveled. This could be caused by poor weather, and heavy, slow moving traffic. Drivers must slow down under certain conditions, such as slick roads, and diminished visibility, to avoid causing an accident. The second leading cause of accidents, both during mild weather and in poor weather conditions, is following too close. The rule of leaving one car length for every ten mph should be doubled when the roads are slick and the weather is poor.

Even with high fuel costs, many local drivers operate four wheel drive vehicles due to our region's weather and surrounding terrain. Four wheel drive vehicles have better traction in slick conditions but do not stop any better than a two wheel drive vehicle. Many operators of these vehicles have a false sense of security when it comes to stopping on slick roads and as a result operate the vehicle at speeds that are too fast for the slick conditions. Many four wheel drive vehicles are larger and heavier than standard vehicles and vehicles that weigh more take longer to stop. With that said, operators of these types of vehicles must take the same precautions as drivers of standard, two wheel drive vehicles and lower their speed accordingly.

### **Additional considerations for winter driving are as follows:**

1. Use low beam headlights when driving in poor weather as the reflection of the light off heavy rain and snow will diminish your vision.
2. Do not use your vehicle's cruise control option as that takes some of your control away from you in regards to your speed.
3. Always wear your seat belt, you may be driving properly and safely but that does not mean the car approaching you is.
4. Clear your windows of snow and ice so your visibility is not diminished. Often times parents are in a hurry to get their children to school and do not clear the vehicle's windows. This not only endangers your child and yourself, but other children and parents in your vicinity.
5. Avoiding quick starts and sudden stops will reduce the chances of you losing traction and sliding into another vehicle or other obstacle.
6. Avoid slamming on your brakes as that will cause the vehicle tires to lose traction putting the vehicle into a skid. If the vehicle does begin to skid, turn in the direction of the slide and make sure to remove your foot from the accelerator.
7. The use of snow tires is recommended and a good time frame for their use would be between October 1st and April 30th. It is also suggested that you carry tire chains with you during the winter months. A short trip to the store with light snow can turn into a long trip home with chain requirements due to our unpredictable weather.

The best option, when the weather is poor, is to stay home and wait for the weather to improve and the roads to clear. If you must drive, one of the safest places would be a safe distance behind a snow plow where the roads will be cleared of snow and sanded or treated with a de-icer. The main concern is if you have to go somewhere that you get there safe.

Law Enforcement partners from left to right Sparks Motor Officer Shane Minick, Washoe County Sheriff Motor Sergeant Mike Gross, Reno Motor Officer Derek Cecil and Nevada Highway Patrol State Trooper Michael Edgell.





# Citizens Can Assist In Providing A Safe Route To School

Here in the Truckee Meadows, citizens and motorists must remember that in addition to regular school, many of our schools are year round.

Safe Routes to Schools empowers communities to make walking and bicycling to school a safe and routine activity. The program provides funding for a variety of projects, such as safer street crossings and campaigns to encourage children and their parents to walk and bicycle.

The Truckee Meadows is establishing a regional Safe Routes to Schools plan that may provide opportunities to apply for federal funding to implement safety programs for school-age children.

Programs such as how to safely ride your bike to school or how to safely cross a street are just two of many programs that individual schools or the school district could participate in. It's also important that motorists remember to slow down in school zones.

Regional police will be out in full force monitoring our school zones, and it is imperative that drivers be on the lookout for children crossing streets on their way to school. Truckee Meadows public works crews have also repainted in school zones and have made sure that signage is in the right place.

Here in the Truckee Meadows, residents and business owners are required to shovel and clear their sidewalks during snow events so pedestrians will not have to walk in the street.



City of Sparks Traffic Maintenance Workers Marty Redding (left) and Dick Kirtley install new heat tape in a school zone.

State and local officials cannot do it all, however, and need the help of residents to make sure the area around their property is clear — not only for children going to and from school, but for all pedestrians, as well.

We encourage property owners to trim back shrubs and tree limbs. With everyone's help, we can make the Truckee Meadows a safe place for pedestrians.

Officer Cooper of the Reno Police Department lends a hand to the student cross walk guards at Veteran's Memorial School.



Middle school students enjoy their morning walk to school.



Officer Drew Olivero with the Washoe County School District Police monitors a busy school zone at Dilworth Middle School during a morning commute.



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## Cold Weather Is Coming It's Time To Winterize Your Home

Each winter, many homeowners face the expense and inconvenience of frozen water pipes. To avoid inconveniences and repair costs, please follow the simple precautions below:

### Inside Your Home:

- Insulate pipes or faucets in unheated areas. If you have water pipes in an unheated garage or crawl space under the house, wrap them before temperatures plummet. Hardware or building supply stores offer appropriate pipe wrapping materials.
- Seal off access doors, air vents and cracks. Repair broken basement windows. Cold winter winds whistling through overlooked openings can quickly freeze exposed water pipes. But, avoid plugging air vents that your furnace or water heater need for safe operation.
- Know the location of your master water shutoff valve. In many homes it's where the water line comes into your house from the street. If a pipe bursts anywhere in the house – kitchen, bath, basement or crawl space – this valve turns off all water and will save your home from damage. So, find it now and paint it a bright color or hang a tag on it. Be sure everyone in the family knows where it is and what it does.

### Outside Your Home:

- Shut off and drain your irrigation system. This may seem obvious, but sometimes people assume that their landscaper or lawn maintenance company has done it for them. This task, which should be done around the end of October, before temperatures are consistently below freezing, only takes a few minutes and can save you hundreds of dollars in repair costs and water bills.
- Disconnect and drain outdoor hoses. Disconnecting hoses from the faucet allows water to drain from the pipe. Otherwise, the ice formed from a single, hard overnight freeze can burst either the pipe or faucet.
- There should be an insulation blanket inside the water meter box on top of the meter. If the blanket is missing, call us at 834-8080, option 2, and the blanket will be replaced; otherwise, the water meter may freeze in extremely cold weather. Please do not replace this specially designed blanket with any other insulation, as this may cause a health hazard. Another type of insulation also may not be able to withstand water and other conditions present within the meter box.

In the event of a broken pipe, TMWA's emergency answering service is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week at 834-8090. A serviceman will be dispatched to perform an emergency shut off of your water service. There is a cost of \$25 during business hours and \$50 after hours. In addition, always have your plumber's telephone number handy just in case there is a broken or frozen pipe. The main point is to be prepared before the cold weather sets in. This could save you a lot of unwanted surprises!





# Working Together To Improve Air Quality In The Truckee Meadows

Winter is when we traditionally experience the worst air quality in the Truckee Meadows. When you see a brown haze over the valley, it means weather conditions are trapping and concentrating air pollution. The Truckee Meadows is currently a non-attainment area for the federal health-based air quality standard for particulates. These small particles are about 1/7 the size of a human hair and bypass our body's natural defense mechanism causing respiratory symptoms and decreased lung function.

Wintertime air pollution in our area is caused by a combination of weather and air pollution sources such as wood stoves, fireplaces, and street sanding. While we can't do anything about the weather, we can reduce the amount of pollution that's put into the air. In 2002, major revisions to local air quality regulations changed the way streets are treated during winter storms. The new regulations established very stringent standards for the amount and type of sand used on the streets, as well as more aggressive street sweeping requirements.



Because air pollution is a regional problem, meeting these new sanding and sweeping requirements requires a regional solution. The City of Reno, City of Sparks, Washoe County, and Nevada Department of Transportation cooperatively develop and update a multi-agency approach to improve our air quality. They maximize their resources by finding the most efficient and effective solutions that meet air quality requirements while still maintaining safe streets. These cooperative efforts have resulted in measurable improvements in wintertime air pollution levels.

To find more about what's being done to improve air quality in the Truckee Meadows, visit our website at [www.co.washoe.nv.us/health/aqm/home.html](http://www.co.washoe.nv.us/health/aqm/home.html), or call us at (775) 784-7200.



**Andrew Goodrich, Director**  
Washoe County District Health Department  
Air Quality Management Division





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A Washoe County loader clearing the way from a fresh snow storm.



City of Sparks Urban Forestry crew members Travis Bartek and Jesse Hon (background) trimming trees in preparation of school and to make sidewalks safe for all pedestrians.



City of Reno tandem snow plows clear streets during a winter snow storm.



A Nevada Department of Transportation truck applies liquid brine solution to the highway in anticipation of another snow storm.



Truckee Meadows Water Authority employees hard at work.



Washoe County street sweeper picks up sand after a snow event, meeting the regional air quality requirement to have all sand picked up within four days of a snow event.



Washoe County school bus driver Joshua Jones watches as students exit his school bus after an early morning ride to school.



Washoe County students/pals getting off the bus and headed to class.



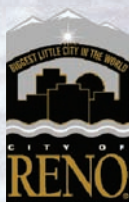
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(775) 834-8300 • [www.nevadadot.com](http://www.nevadadot.com)  
State Road Conditions: Dial 511



(775) 334-INFO • [www.cityofreno.com](http://www.cityofreno.com)



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