

If More Than 2 inches of Snow is Predicted:

What You Should Do

1. Fill up your car with gas.

Abandoned cars cause huge problems.

2. Put a bag of sand or clay kitty litter in your trunk.

The weight provides traction to combat skidding and tire spinning

The sand or kitty litter can be put under your tires if you get stuck.

3. Park your car(s) in your driveway

It'll save you a lot of shoveling.

It allows snowplows to clear a better path, faster.

4. If you can't park a car in the driveway, park it on the side of the street that has odd numbered house addresses.

Snowplows can clear a better path, faster.

5. When you shovel the end of your driveway, throw the snow to the right as you face the road and snowplows will be less apt to undo your work.

What you should expect

1. Before the snow gets 2 inches deep, trucks may spread chemicals on major roads to prevent icy pavements. Chemicals may also be spread on feeder roads where there are "hotspots" (difficult slopes / grades) that VDOT has identified.

2. Trucks will not start plowing until 2 inches has accumulated, but you may see them parked at their assigned area ready to go.

3. Only one 8-foot lane is cleared on subdivision streets. Snowplows will not clear to bare pavement.

4. High volume highways are cleared first, but small trucks that can't handle major highways will start clearing feeder roads and then go into subdivision side streets.

Background

Most equipment and drivers are not VDOT employees. They are private businessmen. When Northern Virginia got 45 inches of snow during February 2010, only about 1700 vehicles were under contract. We now have double that number.

About 1200 of the privately operated vehicles will be equipped with "Automatic Vehicle Locators" to allow VDOT to track where they've been and when. During major storms almost every VDOT staff member (including secretaries) drive assigned areas to look for trouble spots.

You should call 1-800-367-7623 to report problems. You also can email novainfo@vdot.virginia.org and the information will be sent to the closest field office. If you are reporting issues with a snowplow give the approximate time it happened and where.

Finally, you can contact my aide, Deb Sherman, by calling 804-786-1039 during the week or 703-978-2989 on weekends. Send us an email at ywatts@erols.com. Even though we're in Richmond during January and February, we'll do our best to get help to you. Most importantly, many improvements were made to VDOT's procedures based on the 100's of calls and emails we received in 2010.

Vivian

Delegate Vivian Watts