



News from the Ohio Turnpike

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Months of prep, a fleet of superior vehicles, and Turnpike crews are ready to tackle the winter weather

Nov. 12, 2013 (Berea, OH) - The first snowfall of the season has arrived! Meanwhile, the Ohio Turnpike Maintenance Department has been preparing for the past several months. Dennis Albrecht, Assistant Chief Engineer, explained that getting ready for the snow and ice season is a “year round activity” for the Ohio Turnpike, which is typically capped-off in October with comprehensive winter equipment inspections.

A Turnpike-wide, 135-point inspection of all snow plows and equipment takes place just before the first signs of winter weather appear. The maintenance department takes great pride in providing travelers the safest and most reliable roads in Ohio, Albrecht stated, adding, “Our customers expect a premium product and we intend to deliver.”

Now that the winter weather is upon us, Turnpike customers can be assured that up to 100 snowplows will be available at any given moment to maintain the 1,370 lane miles, 31 interchanges, and 14 service plazas on the Ohio Turnpike. Turnpike crews use multiple techniques and advanced equipment to battle old-man winter, including a fairly new piece added to the Turnpike’s fleet a few years ago – the towplow. Towplows have the ability to clear and treat two lanes of traffic simultaneously while using only one truck. According to Albrecht this is a tremendous benefit because it allows additional lane miles to receive attention in less time.

Still, there is a priority plan in terms of clearing snow, especially during extremely heavy snowfall. The Turnpike mainline, specifically the right and center lanes, always takes precedence. Then the crews focus attention on the interchanges ramps and service plazas.

Some of the techniques customers will see this winter season also include tandem plowing, where two snow plows travel one behind the other to clear two lanes at the same time. Another method sometimes performed is Echelon Plowing, which may use up to four snow plows and the towplow closely staggered to clear all lanes of the Turnpike, including the shoulders, with one pass.

All of these efforts are underway on the Turnpike to make it one of the safest routes to travel this winter. This will be accomplished with the help of customers who can do their part too. Simple steps such as: making sure your vehicle is road-ready, planning for extra travel time when necessary and always allowing extra distance between vehicles. Albrecht added, "Motorists should drive according to the conditions of the road and be especially cautious on ramps, bridges and overpasses."

Albrecht emphasized the importance of not passing snow plows and allowing space for the plow drivers to do their job. He stated, "Our experienced and dedicated crews will be working hard to make sure customers have a safe driving experience on the Ohio Turnpike. We ask that motorists give them the space they need to perform their job. The safest place to be on the road is behind a snowplow."

Crews are working in shifts 24/7/365 to provide customers a safe and reliable route on the Ohio Turnpike. Remember "Don't crowd the plow" and have a safe and happy holiday season.