

Snowplow Safety Tips for Passenger Vehicles And Other Drivers

When snow comes, snowplows are not far behind. Drivers need to keep a few facts about snowplows in mind to be safe. First, snowplow drivers are driving in conditions that limit their visibility. This is certainly true if it's snowing. However, even when stopped, weather conditions could still make it difficult to see. Snowplow drivers are doing a dangerous but incredibly important job. They often work in hair-raising, unpredictable conditions. Drivers should drive defensively around snowplows. Be cautious whenever you see them, give them a lot of room and follow the tips below:

- ❑ **Slow Down** – In order to do a proper job, snowplows typically travel at a slower speed (20mph or less) than most traffic, especially while plowing. The slow speed may make you impatient, but you need to drive a safe distance behind them. Many states have adopted the slogan: Don't Crowd the Plow. Make that slogan yours to keep you and your passengers safe around these 30-ton vehicles. Make sure you slow down when you see a plow truck in front of you.
- ❑ **Be Alert** - Snowplow operators have to stop more frequently to ensure that their lights are free of snow and ice buildup and are clearly visible. Make sure to leave additional space between your vehicle and the snowplow ahead of you to allow for more frequent unexpected stops. Snowplow operators often have to back up or turn around in order to clear an intersection. They may need to stop or swerve to avoid obstacles, including stranded cars. Watch for strobe lights in the street and on the side of the road. Whether a snowplow operator is clearing the streets or clearing a driveway, they should always have their strobe lights on.
- ❑ **Turn your lights on** - If you're on the road with snowplow operators there's a good chance it's because it's currently snowing—and possibly snowing pretty heavily. In these conditions, visibility is reduced. Turning on your headlights is important to make yourself visible on the road to snowplow operators as well as other drivers, even during daylight hours.
- ❑ **Do not pass** - Passing a snowplow is a pretty bad idea, all things considered. They may be driving very slowly, but you are always better off following a snowplow than driving in front of one, because the road in front of them hasn't been plowed yet! Even if you have four-wheel drive, just let the snowplow do its job before you try to pass it. Our snowplows come equipped with specialized front and side plows. These side plows, called wing plows, jut out 10 to 12 feet on the side. If you pass them, you run the risk of not clearing the plows, especially if visibility is limited.
- ❑ **Keep your distance** - When snowplows are in operation, they can create a cloud of snow behind them that will reduce visibility. Maintaining a safe driving distance behind any snowplow will help you avoid this.

Stay safe this winter. The snowplows are out on the roads to help you. Stay safe and help them do their job by following these simple tips.