

Overview

Ontario is responsible for the year-round highway maintenance of approximately 17,000 kilometres of provincial highways and 3,000 bridges. The province is divided into 31 maintenance areas overseen by the Ministry of Transportation (MTO).

How highways are cleared

Winter highway maintenance is a continuous operation. Winter maintenance crews are active 24/7 to clear highways. There are more than 1,400 pieces of winter maintenance equipment ready to be deployed on our highways to fight the harshest winter storms.

- **Before a storm**, winter maintenance crews monitor weather and highway conditions, prepare equipment and plan winter maintenance work.
- **During a storm**, winter maintenance is ongoing. Ontario's contractors deploy their equipment within 30 minutes of the start of a winter storm to plow, salt or sand highways.
- **After a storm**, winter maintenance crews continue work to clear highways and perform clean-up and repair work.

Highway Closures

The Ontario Provincial Police decides when to close a highway. Highways may be closed to ensure safety until the weather and highway conditions improve. It's important for drivers to adjust their driving behaviour to changing weather and highway conditions.

What's new for 2023/2024

Remote Weather Information System (RWIS)

- 24 new Road Weather Information System (RWIS) stations (14 in Northern Ontario) have been added supplementing the current 152 standard RWIS stations and 16 solar-powered mini-weather stations, to enable better awareness and response to winter weather conditions.

Snowplow Legislation

- Amendments to the Highway Traffic Act (HTA) came into effect on September 15, 2023, that prohibits the overtaking of snowplows working in echelon formation, on provincial highways with a posted speed limit of 80 km/hr.
- The amendment is expected to enhance safety by helping reduce unsafe passing manoeuvres around working snowplows.

Winter Equipment and Materials Innovations

- Trial use of alternate winter maintenance materials that may be more suitable for extreme cold temperatures in Northern Ontario – potassium acetate and calcium chloride.

- Further review and assessment of the effectiveness and utilization of new equipment configurations including wide wing plows and medium duty combination units.

Information for Travellers

We recommend checking the weather and travel conditions before heading out using the [Ontario 511](#) traveler information service.

Traveller Information

Ontario 511 is the official source for information about traffic, highway, and weather conditions to help drivers make smarter, safer driving choices. Bilingual information is available to the public via four channels:

- Website: www.ontario.ca/511
- Twitter: [@511Ontario](#) (English) and [@Ontario511](#) (French)
- Telephone: dial 5-1-1
- Mobile app: Ontario 511 app

Ontario 511 provides information to help travellers plan their journey in the winter, including:

- Road conditions reported several times per day
- Over 600 cameras showing real-time images of Ontario highways
- Weather forecasts and radar provided by Environment Canada
- Forecasted Driving Conditions based on weather forecasts and pavement temperatures
- Track My Plow feature with current and past locations of winter maintenance vehicles
- Incidents and closures
- Traffic speeds showing stopped and slow traffic
- Notifications via text or email for travel delays, reduced traffic speed, incidents and closures for registered users

The Ontario 511 app is available to all drivers across the province and provides images from over 600 cameras and includes up-to-date highway information on construction, rest areas, collisions, and road closures.

Download the app by visiting the [App Store](#) or [Google Play](#).

Contact Us

Please reach out to Jaclyn Lytle, Stakeholder Relations Advisor, at jaclyn.lytle@ontario.ca if you have any questions regarding the information above.