



# KITSAP COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

614 DIVISION STREET (MS-26), PORT ORCHARD, WA 98366-4699 | KITSAP1: 360.337.5777 | KITSAPGOV.COM

February 14, 2019

Kitsap County experienced an extraordinary weather event beginning Sunday, February 3, with a prolonged series of snow and ice storms, high winds, and severe cold lasting through Tuesday, February 12. Snow accumulations through the period exceeded 20 inches in most of Kitsap County with localized areas experiencing more. Impacts went far beyond snow-packed and slippery road conditions. High winds, downed trees, utility outages, and closed roads affected the entire County and all Public Works operations.

County Snow and Ice Control Policy identifies priorities for clearing operations based on major County arterial roadways and connectors to critical infrastructure and facilities within the County. Priority 1 roads are the top priority for snow and ice control and work continues until they are clear. There are 332 center line miles (664 lane miles) of Priority 1 County roads to clear. There are 320 center line miles (640 lane miles) of Priority 2 roads. Once these priorities are cleared there are an additional 258 center line miles (516 lane miles) left to be cleared that are not on the priority list.

County Road crews have been working two 12-hour shifts (24/7) since Sunday evening, February 3. Throughout this extended period, just when the crews thought they were ahead of the game, another dump of snow set them back to square one. This happened four times during this time period, requiring crews to restart clearing operations on Priority 1 roads. Priority 1 roads must be cleared first to support first responders, law enforcement, power restoration teams, and transit operations. As crews began clearing Priority 2 roads, recurring snow required a return to Priority 1.

High winds and heavy, wet snow caused many downed trees and power lines. Road and utility crews were diverted to clear trees on priority routes where PSE teams were needed to restore power. Public Works was required to augment road crews with utility crews in order to meet the demand. Utility crews were also responding to power outages at sewer treatment plants and pumps stations. This critical infrastructure must have staff attending the backup power generation units during operations. Stormwater crews were used to clear utility plants and storm drains to prevent flooding.

This event was clearly unusual, and in fact, the region has not experienced anything like this in the last 50 years. County road and utility crews have expended considerable effort, away from their own families, to keep primary roadways in reasonably safe and passable condition and critical infrastructure operational for the general public.

Our communications staff worked around the clock to keep the public informed about road conditions and County operations. Our communications center coordinated closely with the County Emergency Operations Center, Kitsap 9-1-1, the Cities, WSDOT, Puget Sound Energy, law enforcement, and fire district officials to assist with emergent needs.

The County's Inclement Weather page ([kcowa.us/inclweather](http://kcowa.us/inclweather)) is always updated with current information. You can review the Snow and Ice Control Policy and see the priority routes on a map at that page. If your road still needs plowing, send email to [help@kitsap1.com](mailto:help@kitsap1.com) or call Kitsap1 at 360.337.5777.

We know that these have been challenging days. Challenging for each of us on a personal basis, challenging for the employees who have worked under some very arduous conditions, and challenging for our County to provide essential operations for our residents. We continue to see many examples of neighbors helping neighbors, and volunteers working together to clear snow and provide transportation to those with immediate needs. We're continuing with our work to clear roads, and we appreciate your patience and understanding.

—Andrew Nelson, Director, Kitsap County Public Works

