

CREWS REMOVING 500,000 TONS OF SNOW IN NORTHERN VIRGINIA

More equipment on the way from Hampton Roads and Richmond

CHANTILLY – The Virginia Department of Transportation estimates it will remove about 500,000* tons of snow from northern Virginia roads over the next several days. VDOT urges motorists to continue to stay off the roads as crews work today to clear snow-packed interstates and other emergency routes. Residents should see at least one pass from a snowplow before Tuesday evening when another storm is expected.

Tomorrow, crews and equipment finishing up snow removal in the Richmond and Hampton Roads areas will head to northern Virginia to assist 1,900 trucks already plowing this hard-hit region. Many of these trucks will head to snow-buried neighborhoods to help clear the 9,000 lane miles of subdivisions and side streets in Fairfax, Loudoun and Prince William counties.

The hundreds of 4x4 pickup trucks VDOT uses in northern Virginia subdivisions for a typical four- to six-inch storm are inadequate to handle the frozen and compacted, deep snow covering most neighborhoods. Snow drifts in some areas are even higher than the subdivision plows. Interstate trucks are too large to fit through neighborhoods, so crews are using special equipment such as graders, bucket loaders, tandems and backhoes. This is a very slow and cumbersome process.

Unlike smaller snowfalls, crews are also hauling snow from areas where there is simply nowhere for plows to push. Along roads such as the Beltway and the I-95/395 high occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes, concrete barriers prevent traditional plowing and large trailers are hauling snow offsite.

Drivers are asked to use extreme caution as thawing today followed by a big re-freeze tonight means that all roads—including those that have been treated and plowed—will remain treacherous.

VDOT reminds residents of the following:

*The main, more heavily traveled roads in a subdivision will be plowed first, to be followed by low-volume roads and cul-de-sacs.

*Plows will make one or two trips to provide a path through neighborhood streets, but they will not clear to bare pavement or from curb to curb.

*Because chemicals are not used in subdivisions, roads will remain snow-packed and rutted after the plow has passed. Crews will sand hills, curves and intersections as needed to provide traction.

*If planning to shovel their driveways, residents should try to refrain from clearing the last few feet at the curb until your street is plowed, as plows may push snow back into driveways. It also helps to shovel to the right as you face the road.

*VDOT does not remove snow from sidewalks or trails.

*VDOT plow drivers have assigned routes that include each and every state-maintained road in northern Virginia.

*Call 911 if you have a medical emergency and need to leave your home.

If by Wednesday, residents have not seen a plow in their subdivision, they can call 703-383-VDOT or e-mail novainfo@vdot.virginia.gov <<mailto:novainfo@vdot.virginia.gov>> with the location. Photos are also welcomed. Crews will be dispatched to treat missed spots and problem areas.