

Dept. of Transportation: December Law of the Month, give snowplows room on the roads this winter

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After every snowfall, plow drivers throughout Wisconsin work long hours to clear nearly 115,000 miles of roads across the state.

Wisconsin State Patrol's December Law of the Month reminds every driver of the importance of giving snowplows the space they need to get the job done.

"The tireless work of these highway workers ensures safe driving conditions for all of us in winter," State Patrol Superintendent Anthony Burrell said. "Drivers should stay off the roads as much as possible when snow hasn't been cleared yet and keep a safe distance when traveling near a plow."

There were almost 3,400 crashes involving snowplows in the past 10 years (2010-2020). Four people died and 533 were hurt in those incidents, many which could have been prevented with careful driving.

Many crashes between snowplows and other vehicles happen when a plow is rear-ended, often by a driver traveling too fast for conditions.

[State law](#) requires drivers to stay at least 200 feet behind a plow clearing ice or snow, or laying salt or sand on a highway with a speed limit more than 35 miles per hour. Drivers should stay at least 75 feet back from a plow on a road with a slower speed limit.

The State Patrol also encourages the following winter driving tips:

- Snow means *slow*. Allow extra travel time, following distance, and reduce your

speed during winter conditions.

- Road conditions in front of a plow will likely be worse, but if you must pass, be careful. Plows often create a cloud of snow that can obscure vision.
- Drivers who get stranded during a winter storm become hazards that interfere with snow removal efforts. If possible, stay off the roads during severe winter weather and wait until conditions improve.
- If you must travel, [check 511](#) for conditions or incidents along your route. Have a fully charged phone and an [emergency kit in your vehicle](#).
- Buckle up and put your phone down while driving. Every trip, every time.

These careful driving practices can help keep every driver and highway worker safe throughout the long winter season in Wisconsin.

Watch the Law of the Month video here: <https://youtu.be/d4f48D1q4mc>