

Continuation:

March 6, 2025

Original presentation:

February 20, 2025

Senate Transportation Committee Winter Snow Operations and State Equipment Fleet

Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities

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MAINTENANCE AND OPERATIONS

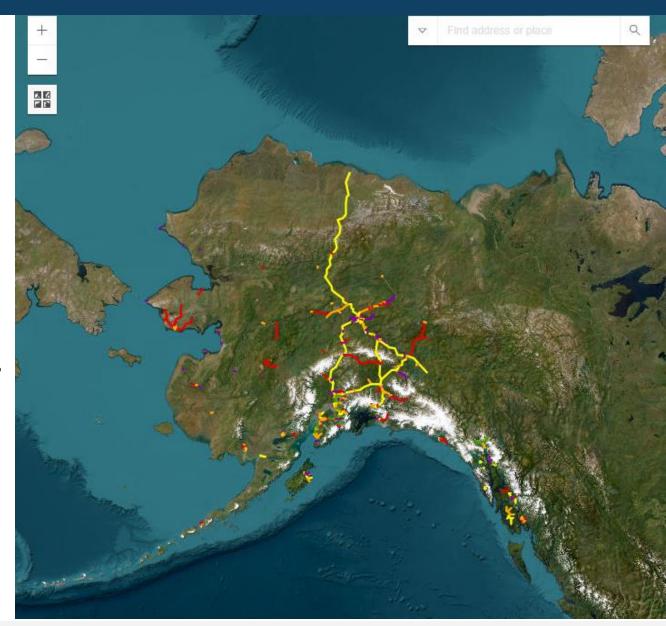


2/20/2025

2

ROAD PRIORITY MAP

In 2022, DOT&PF reported, pursuant to legislative intent language, on how the department establishes and reviews winter road maintenance priorities.





MAINTENANCE & OPERATIONS – AVIATION

237 Airports

- 2 International
- 235 Rural of which 26 are Part 139 Certified

Rural Airport Maintenance (RAM) Contracts

Average \$50.0 - \$100.0 per airport





~82% of communities in Alaska rely on aviation as their only means of access

WINTER OPERATIONS

Category	Condition	Description	Illustration
A	Good Winter Driving Conditions	Bare pavement, good visibility, snow removed from lanes and centerline, acceptable path widths	
В	Fair to Good Winter Driving Conditions	Some lane blockage, icy patches, snow cleared from the traveled way, generally good traction	
С	Fair to Difficult Winter Driving Conditions	Passable roads, standing water or loose snow, patches may cover some lane markings, slow traffic movement	
D	Difficult to Very Difficult Driving Conditions	Challenging travel, moderate snow accumulation, substantial traffic delays	
E	Hazardous Winter Driving Conditions	Travel not advised, considerable snow accumulation, roads may be icy, poor traction, extremely poor conditions	



EMERGENCY RESPONSES: JULY 2024 – JANUARY 2025

July 2024

- Glenn Highway MP 93 Mudslide
- Grapefruit Fire Complex Response Elliott Highway Closure
- Elliott Highway MP 51 Closure due to flooding
- Glenn Highway MP 76 Flooding
- Seward Highway MP 113 Landslide

August 2024

- Suicide Basin Glacier Release Mendenhall River Flooding
- Seward Airport and Nash Road Flooding
- Fire at Juneau Seven-Mile
- Williamsport Pile Drive Landslide and Flooding
- Petersville Road MP 33 Landslide
- McCarthy Road MP 2 Landslide
- Western Alaska Storm
- Ketchikan Landslide

September 2024

- Richardson Highway MP 12-15 Large rocks in southbound lane
- Noatak River Erosion
- Glenn Highway North Peter's Creek Sinkhole

October 2024

- Ketchikan Landslide across Reville Road
- Edgerton Highway MP 29 Landslide
- Glenn Highway MP 73 Boulders
- Fairbanks Area Winter Ice Storm
- Western Alaska Storm:
 - Gambell Airport Closed
 - Nome Council Closed (MP 16-17 debris, MP 23 erosion and log debris, MP 25 breach)
 - Kotzebue Flooding, airport overtopped, airport closed
 - Flooding in: Shishmaref, Unalakleet, Shaktoolik, Numan Iqua, Kotlik, Hooper Bay, Scammon Bay, Chevak, Alakanuk, and Gambell
- Dillingham Ice Storm
- South Central Snow and Ice Storm

November 2024

- Homer Spit Storm, erosion, overtopping
- Ninilchik Erosion

December 2024

- Southeast Snow and Ice Storm
- Gustavus and Cordova Airports Closed
- Klondike Highway Closure
- Anchor Point Flooding
- Gustavus Airport Closed
- Homer Ice Storm, office closure

January 2025

- Anchorage Ice storm, freezing rain
- Southcentral Winter storms
 - Richardson Highway MP 12-46 Closure
 - Rabbit Creek Pedestrian bridge damage
 - Anchorage International Airport –
 Diversions
 - State Office Flooding
 - Anchor Point Flooding
- Fairbanks Rainstorm
- Parks Highway MP 219 Avalanche



Jan. 27 #SouthcentralAlaska: We cannot overemphasize how odd the weather has been for the past 60-72 hours. What made matters worse was the early morning shift back to snow--the warmer asphalt conditions ensured that it became ice almost instantly. Our crews worked throughout the weekend to thaw culverts, clear debris, and patch the growing number of potholes (asphalt, ice and water are always a bad combo). They've switched back as quickly as they can to sanders and graders. ... See more

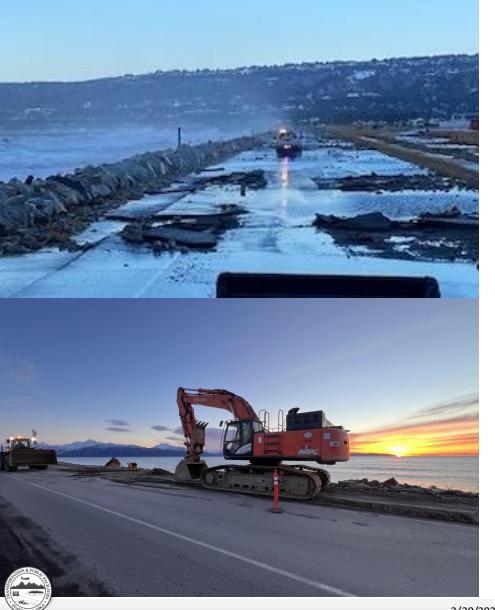






HOMER SPIT STORM DAMAGE

November 16, 2024



Storm Impact

- Damaged by two storms
- High tides, strong winds, and high surf caused rocks, debris, and erosion

Emergency Response

- Homer Police & DOT&PF closed the road and issued public notifications
- Cleanup and repairs began immediately

Restoration Efforts

- Cleared debris and repaired roadway
- Placed riprap to reinforce the structural section
- Reopened to two-lane traffic after three weeks of repairs

RABBIT CREEK PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE RESPONSE

January 12, 2025

Incident Overview

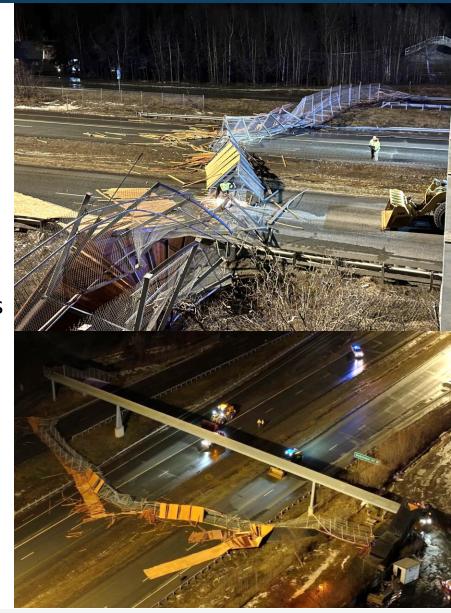
- 2:30 a.m. DOT&PF maintenance worker reported debris on Seward Highway
- DOT&PF & Anchorage Police Department closed the roadway for safety

Response Actions

- Removed fallen decking and caging from the highway
- Used loaders and sweepers to clear debris
- Stationed personnel on-site to secure the area

Structural Assessment

- Bridge engineers inspected the superstructure
- Confirmed structurally sound & intact





THOMPSON PASS RESPONSE

January 11 and 26, 2025

January 11 Storm Impact

- Over 108 inches of snow accumulated
- Crews conducted avalanche control to ensure safety before reopening

Richardson Highway Milepost 18-46 Closure

- Closed: January 26
- Reopened: January 27

Snow and Avalanche Mitigation

- Cleared a naturally occurring avalanche (7-8 feet of snow)
- Continued plowing operations to restore full access



Two young Alaskans were stranded in the extreme conditions in Thompson Pass during the storm. Maintenance crews brought them to the camp for the night to ensure their safety.

"I want to thank whoever was driving the plow Cat that rescued my kid..."

AVALANCHES

AVALANCHES AND HIGHWAY CLOSURES January 1 – December 31, 2024

AVALANCHE ROAD IMPACTS

32

AVALANCHE OCCURENCES

292

TOTAL ROAD CLOSURE HOURS

383.9



Parks Highway Milepost 219, Jan. 2025



DATA MODERNIZATION AND INNOVATION



Traffic & Safety Engineering & Operations

- Traffic Engineering
- Traveler Information
- Intelligent Transportation System
- Connected & Autonomous Vehicles
- Alaska Highway Safety Office

Research & Innovation

- Transportation Research
- Technology Transfer
- Workforce Development
- Process Improvement

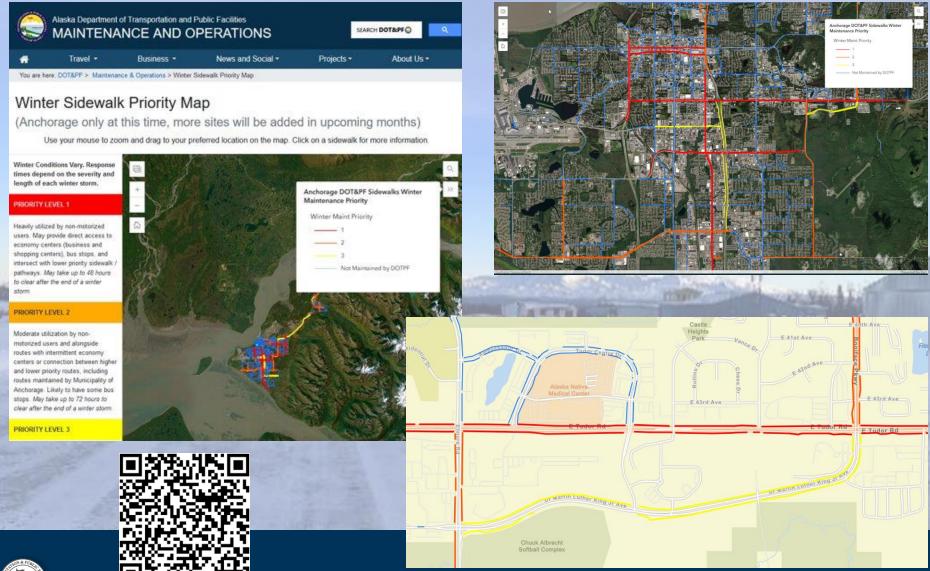
Transportation Data

- Geographic Information Systems (GIS)
- AASHTOWare Project
- Data Analysis & Visualization

Asset Management and Reporting

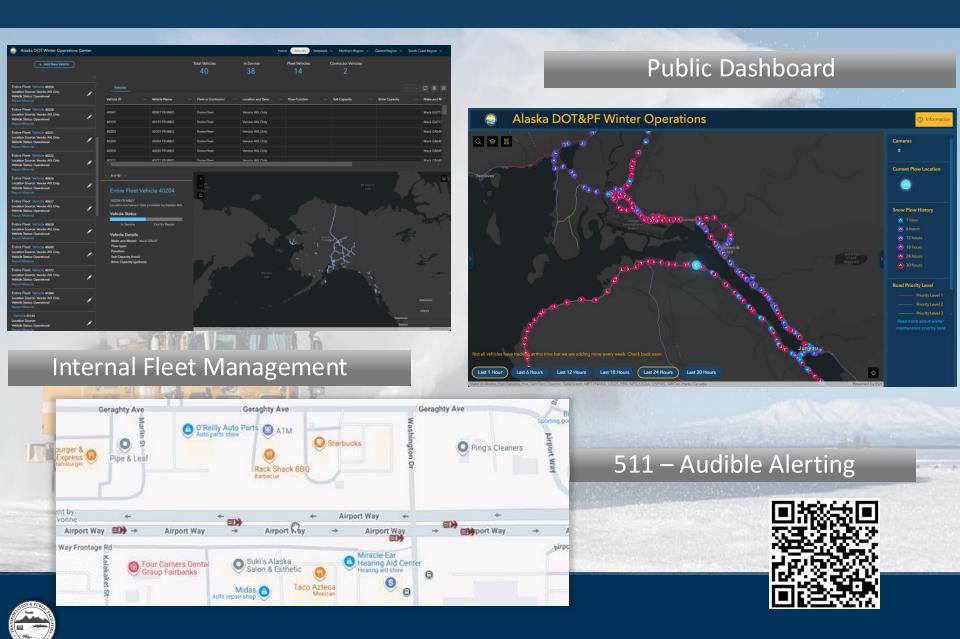
- Bridge & Pavement Condition Reporting
- Highway Performance Monitoring
- Performance Management
- Traffic Volume Monitoring

SIDEWALK VS ROADWAY PRIORITY





WINTER OPERATIONS DASHBOARD



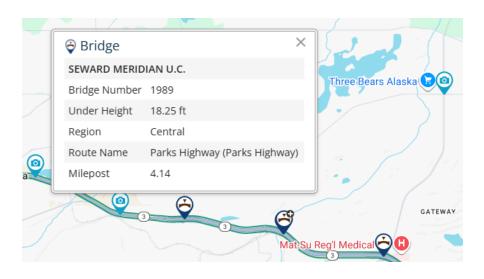
511 – KNOW, EVEN MORE, BEFORE YOU GO



155 INCIDENTS EVENTS CONDITIONS











FUTURE ENHANCEMENTS

Enhancing Real-Time Data Collection

- Mobile Road Weather Information Systems Improved monitoring of conditions
- Traffic Condition & Movement Tracking Increased situational awareness
- Avalanche Detection & Mitigation Proactive safety measures
- Smart Work Zones Optimized traffic flow & worker safety

Key Objectives

- Real-Time Decision Making Faster, data-driven responses
- Automated Alerting
 – Streamlined information sharing
- Advanced Traffic Management System Coordinated statewide efforts
- Joint Operations Center Unified emergency and traffic management

Goal: A Safer & More Reliable Transportation System for Alaska







RESPONSES ARE ADAPTABLE TO SEVERITY OF STORM

- Roadways are plowed based on statewide roadway priorities and further refined into individual plow routes to maximize efficiency and consistency
- Contractors, overtime, and shared personnel are utilized to adjust responses based on storm size, severity, and location

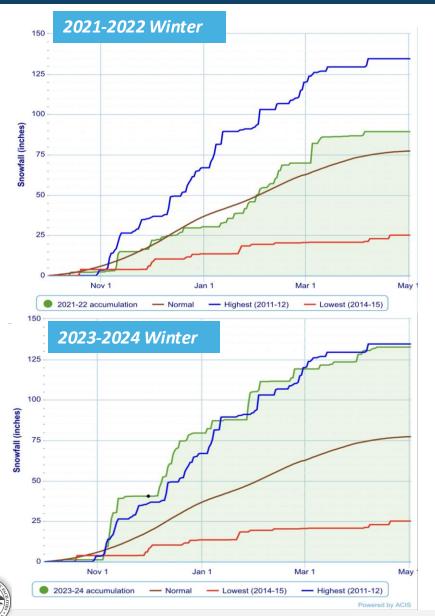
Key Factors in Storm Response

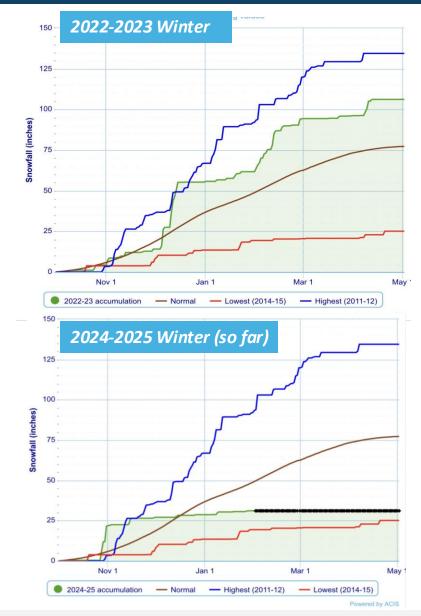
- Equipment availability (downtime impacts response)
- Type and rate of precipitation, asphalt temperatures, wind, and duration
- Temperature trends before, during, and after the event
- Traffic volumes affecting plowing operations
- Snow haul sites availability for clearing
- Emergency calls impacting resource allocation

Outside Badger/Peede Loop (Day 2)		Outside Badger/Hurst Loop (Day 2)		12 Mile Loop (Shift 2)		
Operator:	Truck:	Operator:	Truck:	Operator:		
Operator:	Truck:	Operator:	Truck:	Operator:		
nel:	Radio C	thannel:	Radio (hannel:		
At Riverview Gas	Start	On Plack End Of Nelson Rd	Start O	n Richardson Hwy @ Finell Dr		
Old Badger Rd		1. Nelson Rd		1. Finell Dr		
Persinger Rd		2. Lyle Ave		2. Santa Claus Lane		
Peede Rd		3. Gordon Ave		3. 12 Mile/Old Richardson Hwy		
Brock Rd		4. Hurst Rd		4. Old Richardson Hwy		
Repp Rd		5. Hurst Extension		5. Dyke Rd		
Hollowell Rd		6. Dawson Rd		6. Laurence Rd		
Plack Rd		7. Lineman Ave		7. St. Nicholas Extension		
Nordale Rd		8. Newby Rd		8. Buzby Rd		
reeman Rd		9. Mission Rd		9. St. Nicholas Ave		
Keeling Rd		10. Mistletoe Rd				
		11. Laurence Rd				
	Operator: Operator: Operator: Operator: At Riverview Gas Old Badger Rd Persinger Rd Persinger Rd Peede Rd Peed	Operator: Operator: Truck: Truck: Radio C At Riverview Gas Start Orecinger Rd Persinger Rd Persinger Rd Persinger Rd Persinger Rd Indicate Rd Indica	Operator: Operator: Truck: Operator: Truck: Operator: Truck: Operator: Radio Channel: Start On Plack End Of Nelson Rd 1. Nelson Rd 2. Lyle Ave 3. Gordon Ave 4. Hurst Rd Stepp Rd 5. Hurst Extension 6. Dawson Rd 7. Lineman Ave Nordale Rd 9. Mission Rd 9. Mission Rd 10. Mistletoe Rd	Operator: Operator: Truck: Operator: Truck: Operator: Truck: Operator: Truck: Radio Channel: Rad		



VARIABLE SNOWFALL REQUIRES VARIABLE RESPONSE





EQUIPMENT OPERATORS STAFFING

Maintenance District	Heavy Equipment Operators Positions	Vacancy Rate (as of Jan. 29, 2024)	Vacancy Rate (as of February 3, 2025)
Anchorage	10	33%	50%
Matanuska-Susitna	7	28%	0%
Kenai Peninsula	9	11%	22%
Southwest	5	40%	40%
Dalton	13	0%	23%
Denali	4	50%	25%
Fairbanks	11	36%	55%
Tazlina	6	33%	50%
Tok	8	13%	0%
Valdez	5	60%	40%
Western	8	50%	50%
Kodiak/Aleutian	5	40%	20%
Southeast	12	25%	50%
Total/Average	103	25%	33%

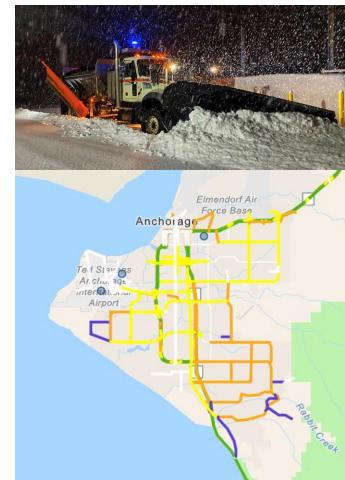
PARTNERSHIPS AND OTHER RESOURCES

Collaborative Efforts Across Alaska

- **City of Fairbanks** Roadway responsibility swaps for improved maintenance
- Municipality of Anchorage Transfer of Responsibility Agreement (TORA)
- City & Borough of Juneau Enhanced priority for Fish Creek Road
- ROW Trespass Agreement Assistance Resolving Right-of-Way issues efficiently
- Signalization Work Optimizing traffic signals to enhance resource sharing

Contract Support for Winter Operations

- **Fairbanks** Priority 3 & 4 roads (4th year of contract support)
- Fairbanks Pedestrian facility maintenance & snow haul trucking
- DNR Support Clearing downed trees and snow removal
- Anchorage Addressing Priority 3 and 4 roads (2nd year of contract support)
- Anchorage Expanding sidewalk maintenance
- Juneau Partnering with City and Borough of Juneau to improve pedestrian access
- **Emergency Assistance** Contractor support for heavy storms





STATE EQUIPMENT FLEET

51 Maintenance Shops Statewide

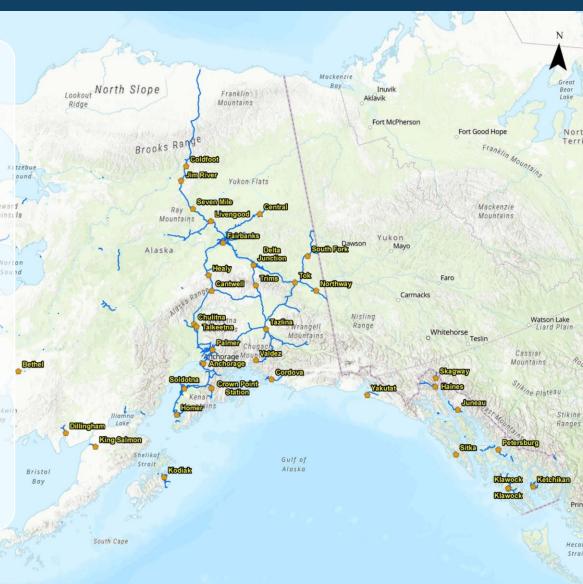
125 Mechanic Positions

Over 7,500 pieces of state equipment and vehicles

- Executive branch
- University of Alaska
- Other state agencies

Primary Focus in October-March: Snow & Ice

Removal Equipment





Esri, USGS, National Land Survey of Finland, Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS

EQUIPMENT MECHANIC STAFFING

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Fairbanks	11	36%	55%
Tazlina	6	33%	50%
Tok	8	13%	0%
Valdez	5	60%	40%
Western	8	50%	50%
Kodiak/Aleutian	5	40%	20%
Southeast	12	25%	50%
Total/Average	103	25%	33%

ALTERNATIVE SOURCES FOR MAINTENANCE RESOURCES

Addressing Mechanic Vacancies

- Increased reliance on alternative repair methods
- Utilizing:
 - Equipment dealers
 - Car & light truck dealers
 - Independent & specialty shops
 - M&O staff & local airport contractors

SEF Contracted Maintenance

(\$ in Thousands)					
FY2022	\$965.9				
FY2023	\$1,245.6				
FY2024	\$1,428.7				
FY2025	\$1,650.0 (projected)				

Exploring New Partnerships

- Working to collaborate with large construction companies
- Potential use of their maintenance facilities for equipment servicing



NEW EQUIPMENT PURCHASING

Current Challenges

Long lead times for heavy equipment (18-24 months)

Improving Availability

Some equipment categories seeing shorter wait times: Loaders & Graders

(8-16 months) _____

FY2022	FY2023	FY2024	FY2025	FY2026
6	9	20	30	30 (projected)







VIRTUAL SNOW SUMMIT

November 21, 2024

Building on the October 2023 Summit

 Continued discussions and regional updates

Key Topics in 2024

- Maintenance Updates Regional insights and improvements
- Statewide Equipment Fleet Overview and optimization
- 511 System Innovations and upgrades
- Winter Operations Dashboard Real-time monitoring tools
- Sidewalk & Pedestrian Improvements Accessibility and safety

Commitment to Future Snow Summits

- Affirmed annual summits for continued collaboration
- Rotating host communities to expand engagement



WHAT IS BRINE?

 Brine is typically Sodium Chloride (solid salt) that is rendered into a solution of 23.3% for direct application on roads or sand to then be used on winter roads



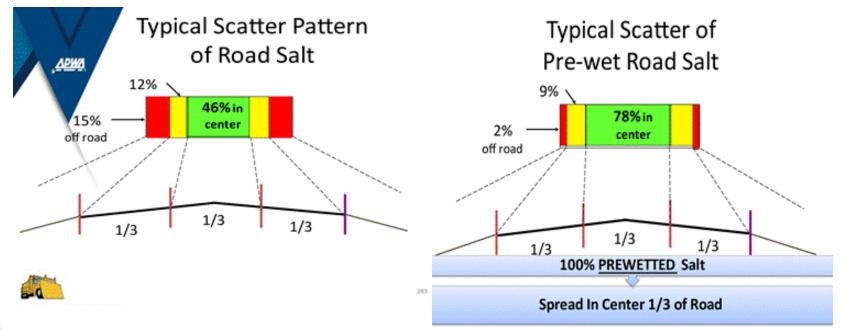






BRINE VS SOLID DE-ICING

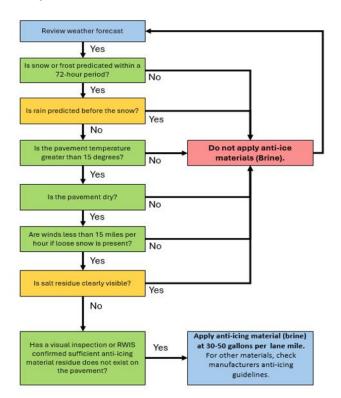
- Improves the persistence of the brine on the road surface prevents a bond forming between the snow and the road surface
- Corrosion inhibitors (additives) used to reduce impact on vehicles and infrastructure, percentage added per product specifications
- Cost savings through faster application, fewer trips to clear, and lower commodity costs (less chemical on road and in environment)





DE-ICING VS ANTI-ICING

- Anti-icing is pretreating a surface to maintain/preserve better condition whereas de-icing is treating a surface after ice has formed
- Without pretreatment, an operator must return to a site more frequently
- Brine pretreatment is data-driven







BRINE ENGAGEMENT ON THE KENAI PENINSULA



Department of Transportation and Public Facilities

OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER Ryan Anderson, P.E., Commissioner

> PO Box 112500 Juneau, Alaska 99811-2500 Main: 907-465-2900 dot alaska any

October 19, 2023

The Honorable Peter Micciche Mayor, Kenai Peninsula Borough 144 N. Binkley Street Soldotna, Alaska 99669

Dear Mayor Micciche:

Allow me to express our gratitude for the outstanding leadership you've provided over the past month within the Kenai Peninsula Borough. The Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF) recognizes and deeply values the concerns voiced by the Borough's citizens regarding vehicle corrosion and safety. We also want to highlight the commendable efforts of the community, including the petition that has now amassed over 5,000 signatures, your letter outlining the concerns, and Borough Resolution 2023-065, which urges the Alaska DOT&PF to initiate further research and contemplate discontinuing the use of salt brine solution on our roadways as we gather more information. We extend our sincere appreciation to the public who shared their concerns at last week's (October 11, 2023) public meeting and the engagement with the KPB Assembly on August 1 and September 19 on this issue.

While the town halls and KPB Assembly conversations have covered some of the responses to your five questions in the August 2 letter, this follow-up seeks to detail the path forward that reflect those discussions and the input received. Additionally, we wish to express our gratitude to the Kenai-area legislators: Senator Bjorkman, Representatives Ruffridge, Vance, and Carpenter, for their proactive involvement in addressing this issue. The increased severity of vehicle corrosion on the peninsula, compared to other regions of the state, is evident. While brine is a cost-effective tool that provides clear pavement when used appropriately, it is coming at a cost to residents which requires the department to change the short-term and long-term approach to brine usage.

As emphasized in your letter, ensuring safety on our highways during winter conditions is of paramount importance to DOT&PF. The people of Alaska depend on a timely and effective response to winter snow and ice events to ensure the safe and efficient movement of people, goods, services, and fuel. Highway deicing chemicals, in conjunction with sand and other abrasive materials that enhance traction, are essential for our ability to cost effectively maintain our highway networks (see enclosure A for background on brine from the American Public Workers Association).

That said, we fully recognize that vehicle corrosion on the Kenai Peninsula is a critical issue, and our use of salt brine solution is likely a leading contributing factor. Given the constraints of our existing equipment and operational parameters, we do not believe it is feasible to fully discontinue the usage of salt brine solution during the upcoming 2023-2024 winter season. Nevertheless, we are deeply committed to finding a short-term and a long-term solution to this problem, and as mentioned in the town hall, effective immediately, our team is implementing the following changes to our winter snow and ice management practices within the Kenai Peninsula Borough:

"Keep Alaska Moving through service and infrastructure."

- 2023 petition with over 6K signatures and auto service companies with concerns
- DOT&PF Commissioner's Office participated in several borough assembly meetings and town halls on brine to directly hear from residents
- Legislative and Borough Mayor letter
- Commissioner directed reduction plan (40%), pilot for Funny River Road, literature review, enhanced brine training for operators, and public engagement
- Winter 2023/2024 saw reduction of ~60%
- Further reduction at milepost 0-16 on K-Beach Road in 2024/2025
- Literature review slated for release in 2025

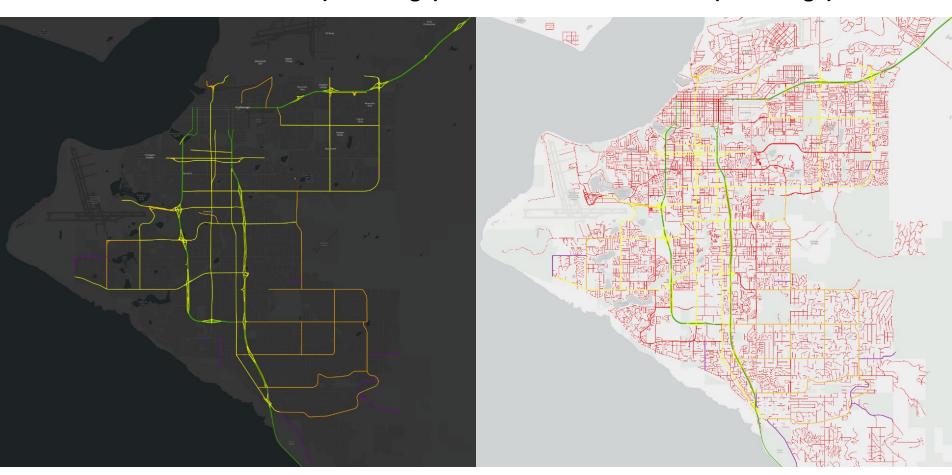


2/20/2025 28

WINTER ROAD MAINTENANCE - JURISDICTIONS

DOT&PF Maintained Roads (Anchorage)

All Roads (Anchorage)





WINTER ROAD MAINTENANCE - PRIORITIZATION

Established by DOT&PF in 2017 to better communicate winter maintenance to public, with small tweaks in the last 5 years



Criteria to establish priorities includes:

- Annual average daily traffic (AADT)
- Weather events
- Major shipping lanes and freight/cargo transport
- Access to other modes of o transportation
- Safety corridors
- Public transit systems
- **Emergency responders** and hospitals route and segment access
- حامينا فللمستحد المستحارات المستحارات

- Population density of surrounding/connected area
- Alternative emergency routes, types of roads, bridges and rivers
 - **Existing DOT&PF resources**
- Distance from M&O station
- Pedestrian facilities*
- Trails and waysides*

* survey results asked for additional consideration

2	Date/Time Event Start	# of Inches	Dat	e time end	X=Completed
3	Priority 1-12 hours after event	9			
	Glenn Hwy	Airport Heights	To	Palmer Alternate	
	Minnesota	Old Seward	To	15th Ave	
	Seward Hwy	15th Ave	To	Indian	
ğ	5th Ave	Airport Heights	To	Karluk	
	Eagle River Loop	Glenn Hwy.	To	Eagle River Rd	
1	Date & Time Priority 1 comple	te			
0			-		
1	Priority 2-18 hours after event		-		
2	SOUTH TEAM		-		
3	Ramps	Seward Highway			
4	Ramps	Minnesota	-		
5	Humphry (Minn. Frontage)	100th	To	Dimond	
6	Dimond Blvd.	Sandlewood		Sandlake Road	
7	Old Seward	Rabbit Creek		33rd Ave	
8	International Airport Road	Homer Drive		S. Aircraft Drive	
9	Cstreet	Minnesota	To	15th	
0	A street	40th	To	15th	
1	Dowling Road	Elmore Road		Raspberry Rd.	
2	Raspberry	Dowling Rd.	To	Sandlake Road	
3	Jewel Lake	Dimond	To	International Airport	
4	Milliancia Co.	2000000		a process of the contract of t	
5	NORTH TEAM		_		
6	Ramps	Glenn Highway			
7	Muldoon Road	Regal Moutain Dr.	To	JBER gate	
8	Tudor Road	Minnesota	To	Regal Moutain Dr.	
9	Boniface Parkway	Tudor Road		JBER gate	
0	Debarr Road	Muldoon Road		Airport Heights	
i	Northen Lights Blvd.	Lake Otis	To	Forest Park Dr.	

Sample routing sheet for operator with priorities

The Residence of the Re			 School bus routing 		
PRIORITY 1	PRIORITY 2	PRIORITY 3	PRIORITY 4	PRIORITY 5	
May take up to 12 hours to clear after a winter storm.	May take up to 18 hours to clear after a winter storm.	May take up to 24 hours to clear after a winter storm.	May take up to 30 hours to clear after a winter storm.	roadways that are designated as "No Winter Maintenance" routes, e.g. Denali	
high-volume, high- speed highways, expressways, minor highways, all safety corridors and other major urban and community routes.	routes of lesser priority based on traffic volume, speeds and uses. Typically, these are major highways and arterials connecting communities.	major local roads or collector roads located in larger urban communities.	minor local roads that provide residential or recreational access.	Highway or Taylor Highway. Generally cleared only in spring to open road for summer traffic.	

LEGISLATIVE INTENT - ROAD PRIORITIES SURVEY

FY2023 INTENT LANGUAGE

It is the intent of the legislature that DOT&PF create and implement a method to solicit input from and consult with local municipalities, community organizations, Metropolitan Planning Organizations, Regional Transportation Planning Organizations and service areas on the creation and revision of the prioritized list of state-maintained roads and highways for snow plowing, and to coordinate these efforts, where appropriate, with local governments and service areas. This plan shall be developed and submitted to the Finance Committee Co-Chairs and Legislative Finance Division by December 20th, 2022.

CY2022 STIP List (Survey #1)

1,100 contacts reached municipal (mayors and city managers), village and city council members.
616 total submissions received.

CY2022 MPO Member (Survey #2)

Distributed to Municipal Planning Organization members directly. 31 total submissions received from MPO members.

CY2022 Community Council (Survey #3)

Distributed to community council members directly from lists compiled by DOT&PF communications staff. 42 total submissions received.

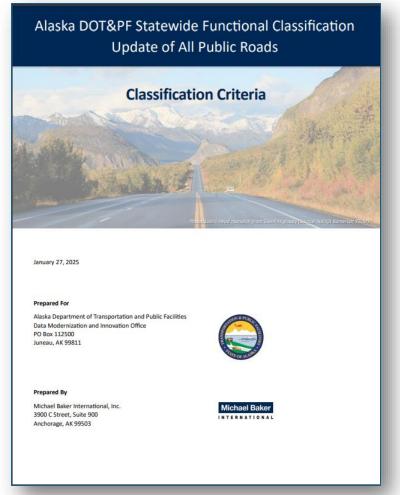
Survey Results

2022 Winter Road Priority Maint. Criteria Ranking (Survey Summary)			Community
,	STIP List	MPO	Council
Road Criteria to Rank (Importance)	(survey #1)	(survey #2)	(survey #3)
Public transit systems	6.7	7.9	5.5
Safety corridors	7.8	7.9	7.4
Speed limit of road	7.2	7.7	7.8
Road characteristics	8.4	6.9	4.8
Existing DOT&PF resources	8.1	7.2	7.6
Bridges and Rivers	8.6	6.2	7.7
Type of road	8.5	7.9	8.0
Annual average daily traffic	8.0	7.9	7.5
Weather events	10.0	8.4	9.9
Alternative emergency routes	8.3	7.2	8.3
Population density	7.4	7.9	7.1
School bus routing	7.8	7.9	7.7
Distance from M&O station	5.6	4.3	5.9
Route and segment access	6.7	6.6	6.4
Reliable access for emergency responders and hospitals	9.9	10.0	10.0
Major shipping lanes and freight/cargo transport	6.7	7.9	5.5
Access to other modes of transportation	7.8	7.9	7.4
Presence of non-motorized facilities		6.9	4.8

(Green weighted scores are over 8 and ranked as higher importance, Red weighted scores are lower than 6 indicating criteria is less important. See detailed survey summary in Appendix B of this report).



WINTER OPS - CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENTS



Responsive improvements:

- Functional classification census review
 happening 2024-2025
 (March 27 is next public engagement,
 April 15 in Anchorage and through December
 of this year)
- Pedestrian-specific focus with mapping of Anchorage sidewalk priorities in 2024
- M&O has ongoing discussions with local government on additional local road swaps (efficiency of operations)
- Priority 3 & 4, plus sidewalk contractor support through supplemental service
- Winter Ops Dashboard piloted, working on expanding to other areas of Alaska



2/20/2025 32

THANK YOU. QUESTIONS?

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