

# VAN BUREN COUNTY ROAD COMMISSION

# NEWS RELEASE

BETTER HIGHWAYS: SAVE LIVES, SAVE TIME, SAVE MONEY

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Lawrence, Michigan	2012 #1
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RELEASE: Immediately	

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## **SNOWPLOWS NEED ROOM TO GROOM**

### ***THE ROAD COMMISSION WANTS YOU TO KNOW . . .***

In collaboration with the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) and the County Road Association of Michigan (CRAM), the Van Buren County Road Commission announced their participation in an education campaign aimed at urging motorists to remember good driving habits in winter weather conditions, "Snowplows Need Room to Groom!"

"Van Buren County road crews respond before, during and after winter storms, to ensure safe travel conditions for motorists, Engineer-Manager, Lawrence B. Hummel said. "Motorists must remember to drive with caution no matter how much salt/sand we use or how often roads are plowed."

A steady decrease in road funding and an increase in costs have caused state and local agencies to alter their winter maintenance plans and change plowing priorities. One importance fact has not changed, road crews must have ample room in order to safely clear the many miles of roadway of snow and ice.

"Motorists must do their best to minimize distractions and focus on driving and changes in road conditions," John Niemela, County Road Association of Michigan director, said. "Every year, despite the flashing lights, poor driver behavior near snowplows leads to collisions that can be deadly."

"With less staff and aging equipment, it may take our road crews longer to clear all county roads," Hummel said. "Providing snow plow drivers with space to safely maneuver will keep both our crews and motorists safe, and help to expedite snow removal."

MDOT, CRAM and the Van Buren County Road Commission offer the following reminders for motorists:

- Snowplows have limited visibility and drivers cannot see directly behind their trucks;
- Snowplows often throw up snow clouds, reducing visibility on all sides of the truck;
- To remain focused on driving, motorists should not text or talk on cell phones while they are behind the wheel;

- Motorists should never attempt to pass a moving snowplow on the right. With new wing-plow technology the blade can clear the shoulder and the lane of travel simultaneously. Motorists attempting an illegal pass through a snow cloud on the right and/or shoulder of the road most likely won't see the plow blade and run the risk of a serious crash; and
- Always wear your safety belt and allow extra time to reach your destinations this winter.

"We urge motorists to drive with caution when traveling in inclement weather to ensure that everyone arrives at their destinations safely," Lawrence Hummel said. " Snowplows Need Room to Groom!"

Remember – in Ice and Snow, Take it Slow!

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