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Don't Crowd the Plow: Watch for snow plows during busy travel time

The North Dakota Department of Transportation (NDDOT) wants to remind motorists to be cautious of snow plows during this busy travel time. Plow trucks are working hard to clear snow and ice from state highways and need your help to ensure safe travel.

NDDOT employs approximately 355 snow plow operators in the state who are the eyes and ears on the road, reporting actual conditions that are then implemented onto the Travel Information Map. NDDOT snow plow operators maintain over 8,000 miles of roadway throughout the state and work weekends and holidays.

In addition to standard plow trucks, the NDDOT also utilizes a piece of equipment called the TowPlow. The TowPlow is a trailer mounted plow, which is pulled and operated by a snow plow truck. The combination of the front truck plow along with the TowPlow can clear a path approximately 24 feet wide in one pass. The TowPlow can operate in multiple lanes and is equipped with steering axles which swings the trailer from behind the truck into an adjacent lane.

Don't crowd the plow. Sharing the road with snow plows is important. By following a few basic tips, you and your passengers can reach your destination safely:

- Stay back. Sometimes snow plows have to stop and back up and they often spread sanding material.
- Know where the plow is on multi-lane roadways. The TowPlows could be in both lanes or on the shoulder.
- Be extremely cautious when passing a snow plow. They can be moved sideways by snow drifts and hard snow packs.
- Never drive through "white-outs" caused by cross winds or plowing light snow. Be patient and wait until you can see. Snow plows pull over and stop to allow traffic to pass when it is safe to do so.
- Slow down and drive for the conditions. Most winter crashes are caused by driving too fast for conditions.
- Motorists should be aware of the "Move over Law." If you approach a snow plow or other emergency vehicles with flashing lights that is stopped on the shoulder of a multi-lane road, you must move over to the lane that is not next to the snow plow or vehicle, if it is safe to change lanes.

For more information on snow plow safety go to:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qW_zwbdhvuk&feature=youtu.be

As you travel this week, please check road conditions often by downloading the NDRoads app, calling 511 or checking the Travel Information Map at www.dot.nd.gov.