

MDOT launches 'STORM' web app

Posted by [Alan Van Wormer](#) On 11/20/2018

The Maryland Department of Transportation State Highway Administration (MDOT SHA) held its annual "Snow Show" event today at the Statewide Operations Center in Anne Arundel County. MDOT SHA Administrator Greg Slater unveiled its newest tool for citizens to plan for safe winter travel – STORM (Statewide Transportation Operations Response Map), a mobile-friendly [web application link!](#)

STORM enables citizens to track MDOT SHA and contractor's pre-treating brine trucks in advance of a storm and plow trucks during a storm in real-time. Citizens can enter their address to see the trucks operating in their area. Equipment is visible only when moving at 10 mph or greater, which will eliminate screen clutter, especially near maintenance shops where trucks are moving at slower speeds.

"The STORM App is an innovative way to enhance the customer experience," said MDOT SHA Administrator Gregory Slater. "An average snow route takes a plow driver approximately 90 minutes to complete. The new app will show where they are and where they have most recently traveled."

Measurable snowfall has already fallen in Western Maryland and temperatures are rapidly falling in the rest of the State, so winter weather is on the horizon. MDOT SHA is fully stocked with material and equipment is ready to keep Maryland's roads and bridges safe and passable this winter. While road salt is a proven and efficient way to treat roads during winter storms, MDOT SHA is making significant strides to reduce its overall salt usage.

Anti-icing (Pre-treating):

MDOT SHA pre-treats State-maintained roads with salt brine in advance of winter storms that are forecasted to start as snow on the onset. If it's rain or freezing rain, the material will simply be washed off the road, wasting labor, materials and time. The temperature must be 20 degrees higher to apply salt brine. Salt brine is roughly 23 percent salt and 77 percent water.

Crews spray brine on roads in the days preceding a storm, allowing it to dry, leaving familiar streaks on the road. The film on the road helps to prevent the initial bonding of snow and ice from forming.

Pre-wetting granular salt:

Another proven salt reduction technique is pre-wetting salt before dispensing it onto the roads. MDOT SHA wets the salt with salt brine at the distribution spinner directly before its applied to travel lanes. This helps it adhere to road surfaces and prevent waste due to "bounce and scatter." Experience and studies show that pre-wetting can lead to a 30 percent reduction in salt usage.

Liquid-only routes:

MDOT SHA has designated many routes in the State as "liquid only" snow routes. This simply means that, in normal, non-blizzard storms, MDOT SHA crews will use salt brine only during the actual treatment of these roads during a snow storm.

During the storm

MDOT SHA's advice is to TAKE IT SLOW ON ICE AND SNOW. Remember: don't pass snow plows or plow trains. The unplowed roads are ahead of the plows and the treated roads are behind them.

MDOT SHA asks motorists to clear snow completely off vehicles before driving. A clean vehicle provides increased visibility, and packed snow on car tops can become dangerous projectiles in the days after a storm.

When the weather service forecasts storms with six or more inches of snow, MDOT SHA designates certain park and ride lots where commercial truck drivers can pull off and wait out the storm. These lots serve as safe havens for truckers. For a complete listing of emergency truck parking locations, [click here](#).

MDOT SHA deploys heavy-duty tow trucks to strategic locations where there is a history of trucks becoming disabled. These large wreckers help expedite the removal of the tractor trailer and enable crews to keep lanes open for continued snow operations.

Communication

MDOT SHA maintains the State's numbered, non-tolled roads in the 23 counties. To see what agency is responsible for what road, click on ["Know Your Roads."](#)

MDOT SHA crews work hard to keep roads passable during snow storms to maintain access to critical services, such as hospitals. Motorists are encouraged to log onto www.md511.org for current travel information including current snow emergency plans. Finally, follow SHA on social media via Twitter @MDSHA and on Facebook at <http://www.Facebook.com/MarylandStateHighwayAdministration>. The social media platforms are staffed business hours Monday through Friday and during major emergencies and storms.