

SNOW AND ICE

Roadways

- There are over 1,044 lane miles of county highways and county roads that Hubbard County maintains. 282 miles are paved and 240 miles are gravel surfaced.

Weather

- Last year, Minnesota received an average of 66.8 inches of snow across the state. Minnesota annually receives about 58.6 inches of snow with about 26 snowfalls.
- Snow fall and weather can vary considerably in Hubbard County from north to south.

Snowplows

- Hubbard County has 10 snowplow drivers. All operators are required to have a valid commercial driver's license, and subject to federal regulations and safety standards. Hubbard County has 11 snowplow routes. The 11th route is contracted out to local contractors throughout the county. Hubbard County has three truck stations, including the main shop in Park Rapids, a truck station in Nevis and a truck station north of Kabekona in Guthrie Township.
- The average snow plow route is over 94 lane miles (not including shoulders). Blacktop roads are generally plowed first followed by additional salt-sand placement and shoulder clearing and work on weather created problem areas, plus clearing gravel roads as needed depending on accumulations. The mainline clearing of paved roads generally takes 4 to 5 hours, with operators often starting at 3:00 a.m. in the attempt to stay ahead of morning commuters and school bus traffic.
- When operators are not involved in snow and ice operations, they work on priority maintenance projects including equipment maintenance, blading gravel roads, debris removal, roadside clearing and right of way maintenance, crack sealing, culvert and drainage repair, pavement patching, and construction.

Equipment

- The county has 10 trucks for snow removal, all equipped with sanders. A tandem axle truck rigged for snow plowing cost about \$150,000.00. and weighs about 10 times more than the average car. These plows are workhorses. MN/DOT reports that Minnesota averages 58.6 inches of snow each year. An average foot of snow weighs about 8 pounds (6 to 12 lbs depending on moisture). Therefore an average snowplow removes 74,000 tons of snow and ice each year. Last year Hubbard County spread more than 7,214 tons of salt and sand for deicing and added traction for traffic on county highways.

Snow storms

- Snow removal times can vary depending on moisture content of the snow and weather conditions and when snowfall occurs. A snowfall that occurs before and during a morning commute will cause more problems than a snow falling from midnight to 3:00 a.m. Heavy wet snow (or mixed with freezing rain) followed by a cold snap could require a lot more time to clear than a dry snow.
- Snow removal operations generally begin in accordance with the adopted Hubbard County Snowplowing Policy, but varying weather conditions, forecasts, operating time and economics play a measurable part in decision making. Driver expectations continue to grow beyond what can be reasonably delivered. Mother Nature often dictates what can be accomplished.
- Two of the biggest factors that determine our performance are the type of storm and range of temperatures. Storms with low temperatures can be difficult because deicing chemicals become less effective at lower temperatures. Storms with high winds also are a challenge because the snow quickly blows back onto the roadway after the plow passes. There are reportedly more than 65,000 combinations of winter storms and each poses a unique challenge to snow & ice removal.