

What is RCOC?

The Road Commission for Oakland County is Michigan's largest county road commission, with a 2,600-mile road system (including 850 miles of gravel roads). Only the state highway system is larger.

RCOC also maintains:

- Approximately 80 bridges,
- Approximately 1,200 traffic signals,
- Approximately 90,000 traffic signs and
- More than 310 miles of state highway.

Safety first

As a matter of policy, major road improvement projects are conducted by the Road Commission based on a safety ranking system. At RCOC, "Safety First" is more than a motto.

RCOC:

- Is separate from county general government
- Receives the majority of its funding from the state gas tax
- Has congested roads due to the tremendous growth in the county
- Receives no direct revenue from growth and development
- Pays up to \$950,000 to pave a mile of gravel road
- Pays \$3 to \$4 million to widen one mile of road from two lanes to five
- Is located in a state with a gas tax below the national average (even after the 1997 4-cent increase)
- Is located in a state that ranks in the bottom nine states in per capita road funding



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Board of Road Commissioners

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Vice-Chairman

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Brent O. Bair
Managing Director

Gerald M. Holmberg, P.E.
Deputy Managing Director
County Highway Engineer

RCOC Mission Statement

RCOC strives to provide the public with leadership in:

- Safe and convenient roads
- Sound financial management
- Responsive and dependable service

Have a question for the Road Commission?

Call or write:

Department of Citizen Services
2420 Pontiac Lake Road
Waterford, MI 48328
(248) 858-4804
TDD: (248) 645-9923

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RCOC's

Winter Road Maintenance



Keeping the roads clear
in Oakland County

**The Road Commission for
Oakland County**

Your local road professionals

RCOC Winter Road Maintenance

WINTER MAINTENANCE

Winter road maintenance is a top priority for the Road Commission for Oakland County (RCOC).

RCOC crews strive to keep the 2,600 miles of county roads and Oakland County's 310 miles of state highways clear and passable. The Road Commission has a fleet of more than 100 snow plows and salt trucks ready 24 hours a day, seven days a week during the winter.

THE HIGH-TECH APPROACH

Half the battle is knowing when the snow is coming and how much is coming. RCOC employs a variety of state-of-the-art tools to monitor the weather.

In 1998, RCOC installed three high-tech weather stations around the county. They provide real-time information on weather conditions, so RCOC can better deploy crews and equipment.

RCOC also uses Doppler radar to detect approaching storms, and pavement sensors on a few select bridges alert dispatchers to changing surface conditions. Additionally, RCOC relies upon a professional weather forecasting service that provides detailed storm alerts.

SEMSIM

In the near future, RCOC, in partnership with the Wayne County Department of Public Services, the City of Detroit Department of Public Works and the Road Commission of Macomb County, will begin implementation of a state-of-the-art fleet management program known as Southeastern Michigan Snow and Ice Management (SEMSIM).

Through SEMSIM, the agencies will implement a satellite-based fleet management technology that will provide more efficient and cost-effective winter road maintenance. The program, part of RCOC's Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) efforts, is historic because it represents the first time anywhere in the nation that four large agencies have joined forces to implement cutting-edge ITS technology to improve winter road maintenance.



ROAD PRIORITIES

RCOC winter maintenance road crews maintain state and county roads in Oakland County based on a priority system.

At the top of the list are "critical priority" roads, which carry traffic volumes greater than 10,000 vehicles per day per lane. This includes the freeways and major surface streets such as Woodward Ave.

Next are "priority 1" roads, which carry traffic volumes of 2,500 to 10,000 vehicles per day per lane, such as major "mile" roads. Priority 2 and 3 roads are those with less traffic volumes.

After clearing higher volume roads, crews move to neighborhood or subdivision streets which see far fewer vehicles. Long-lasting storms can delay trucks from getting to subdivision streets for several days.

RCOC also divides the day into service periods, with weekday rush-hour periods being the most critical and overnight weekend periods the least.

RUSH-HOUR STORMS



The storms likely to cause the most inconvenience for drivers are those that strike during or just before the rush hour. Salting in advance does little good. That means that during rush-hour storms, RCOC trucks are battling the same traffic as other motorists, as they attempt to plow or salt, which significantly slows the road clearing efforts.

SAFETY FIRST

If you're driving during inclement winter weather and you see a salt truck or snow plow, use care. RCOC drivers are specially trained to drive salt trucks and snow plows, but the trucks are larger than most vehicles, so they take longer to stop and need more room to turn. Please give them plenty of room to do their jobs.

WINTER MAINTENANCE FACTS

- RCOC salt trucks/snow plows are kept at six garages located throughout the county
- RCOC stores its salt at six locations around the county
- Guidelines call for 800 pounds of salt to be applied to each two-lane mile of pavement
- In the winter, RCOC crews are split into day and night shifts
- RCOC crews can be on the road for up to 16 hours before they must take a five-hour break
- A single salt truck run can use up to 12 tons of salt
- At temperatures below 20 degrees, salt begins to lose its effectiveness
- At 0 degrees, salt does virtually nothing
- During the winter, RCOC keeps salt trucks loaded and ready to go 24 hours a day
- RCOC usually doesn't use sand on paved roads because it clogs storm drains and doesn't melt ice. Sand is used on gravel roads where there are no storm sewers and salt is less effective



THE COSTS OF WINTER MAINTENANCE

RCOC spends \$6 million to \$8 million annually on winter maintenance, including nearly \$3 million just on salt — with no lasting road improvements to show for it. One 24-hour storm alone can cost RCOC more than \$500,000 to clear, including the costs of salt, vehicle maintenance, wages and overtime (a 24-hour storm can require three days of cleanup to get all streets clear). A light dusting of snow can also be costly for RCOC — even if residents don't have to shovel their driveways, the Road Commission still has to salt the roads.