

# DRIVE SAFELY NEAR SNOWPLOWS



By removing snow and ice from our roads, snowplows make driving safer for all of us. However, driving too close to snowplows can be a winter hazard on its own. Most snowplow/passenger vehicle crashes occur when passenger vehicles hit snowplows from behind or while attempting to pass.

Follow these tips to stay safe and give snowplows the room they need to do their job.



## 1. SLOW DOWN AND ALLOW AT LEAST 6 TO 10 CAR LENGTHS BETWEEN YOUR VEHICLE AND THE SNOWPLOW

If you can't see the snowplow's mirrors, the driver can't see you. Hanging back will also give you better visibility if the plow is creating a "snow cloud," and more reaction time to hit the brakes if the snowplow stops (which they often do). Another good reason to stay back: the snowplow may be spreading salt, sand and/or calcium chloride.



## 2. DO NOT PASS

Be patient. While it may be tedious to be stuck behind a slow-moving snowplow, you're better off to hang back and not attempt to pass. Here's why:

- \* **Snowplows are heavy!** They can weigh as much as 30 tons. A passenger vehicle weighs in at around 2 tons.

- \* **Snowplows can be unpredictable.** They make wide turns and sometimes overlap lanes.
- \* **Plow blades are sharp.** In a collision, the blade of the plow can tear apart a smaller vehicle.
- \* **Wing plows can be invisible.** The wing plow — a 10-foot plow on the side of the truck which extends 2 to 10 feet beyond the truck's width — can weigh nearly as much as a compact car. While in use, it can kick up enough snow to obscure it completely from view.
- \* **It's the law (on one side, anyway).** It is illegal in Michigan to pass a snowplow on the right. And while it's not illegal to pass on the left, you should do so with extreme caution.



### 3. WHEN YOU MEET A SNOWPLOW

If you meet a snowplow coming in the opposite direction (such as on a two-lane road), slow down by taking your foot off the accelerator, turn on your windshield wipers and increase your distance from the centerline (if you can do so safely).



### 4. MOVE OVER FOR STOPPED SNOWPLOWS

A snowplow is considered an authorized vehicle for purposes of Michigan's Move Over law. If you see a stationary snowplow on the side of the road, you must slow down to at least 10 mph slower than the speed limit and move over to an open lane. If this is not possible, slow down and pass, allowing as much room as possible.

**Violating the Move Over law can result in penalties and fines.**



### 5. ACCESS Mi DRIVE TO SEE WHERE MANY ROADS HAVE BEEN PLOWED

An online tool from the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) called Mi Drive can show you many of the roads in Michigan that have been recently plowed, in addition to a wealth of other road safety information. Access Mi Drive at [Michigan.gov/drive](https://Michigan.gov/drive).

