

WINTER WEATHER GUIDE



Help Our Snow Removal Team Help You

Working Together for Safer Roads this Winter



Welcome to Los Alamos County's Winter Weather Guide: Help Our Snow Removal Team Help You.

MESSAGE FROM THE SNOW REMOVAL TEAM:

At an elevation of 7,400 feet, Los Alamos can experience winter storms stretching from November through April. During this time, our dedicated snow removal team, part of the Traffic and Streets Division of the Public Works Department, works tirelessly to keep our roads safe and accessible for residents, visitors, and commuters.

We prepared this guide to share how we prepare for and respond to winter storms, the steps you can take to assist us, and essential tips for navigating snowy and icy conditions. Together, we can ensure our community stays safe. Thank you for partnering with us!

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**SNOW RESPONSE IS A
COMMUNITY EFFORT.**



What We Do: Behind the Scenes of Snow Removal

OUR GOALS & OBJECTIVES DURING A WINTER STORM

- 1 Provide safe access for emergency vehicles.
- 2 Maintain the safest possible flow of commuter traffic through the county, emphasizing access to bus routes and schools.
- 3 Restore normal driving conditions as soon as possible after a storm has ended.

HOW WE PREPARE FOR WINTER STORMS

- Pre-season training, equipment maintenance, salt/sand stockpiles and deicing material.
- Review and update our [Snow & Ice Plan](#), which is made available on our MyCommute web page, every year. This is an internal document that ensures we have a coordinated response to adequately address various situations.

HOW WE PRIORITIZE SNOW REMOVAL

- Our highest priority is to remove snow from the main roads, emergency routes, and school zones (roads that provide access to destinations across town, such as Diamond, Trinity, Central or Rover).
- Our second priority is roads that funnel traffic to and from neighborhoods onto the main roads (such as Urban, Villa, North Road and La Senda).
- Our third priority is to address neighborhood streets.
- See the Los Alamos County Priority Maps: lacnm.com/PriorityMaps

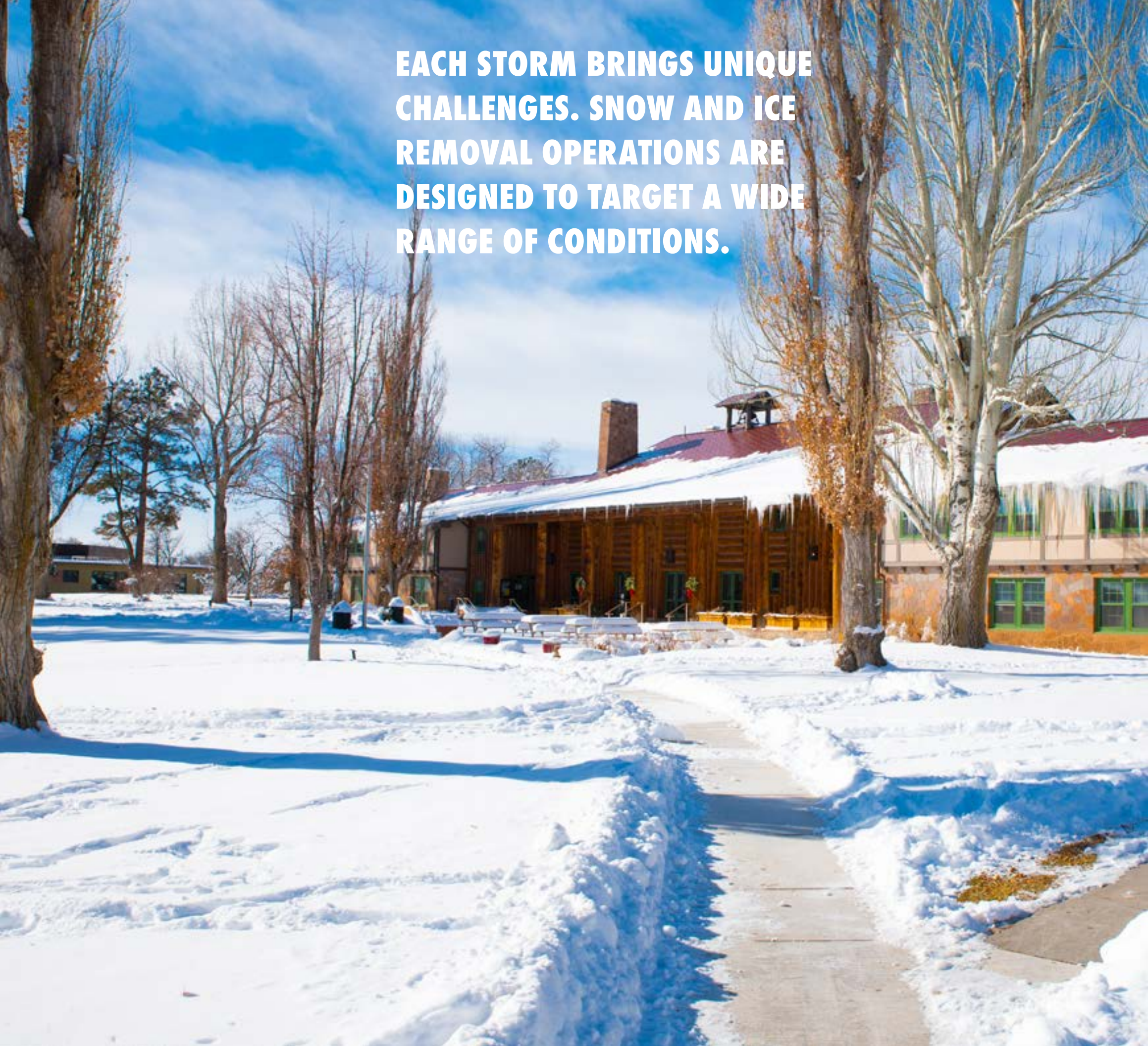
TECHNOLOGY AND TOOLS USED

- Snowplows, deicing materials, and salt spreaders.

CHALLENGES WE FACE

- When removing snow, our team often encounters challenges that make our job difficult: traffic, parked vehicles, residents shoveling snow into the road, and clogged storm drains.

EACH STORM BRINGS UNIQUE CHALLENGES. SNOW AND ICE REMOVAL OPERATIONS ARE DESIGNED TO TARGET A WIDE RANGE OF CONDITIONS.



**SNOW REMOVAL CREWS
SUPPORT 47 COUNTY FACILITIES
CLEAR 39 PARKING LOTS
AND 112 MILES OF ROADWAY
UTILIZING 47 PIECES OF EQUIPMENT.**



What You Can Do
to Help Us, So We
Can Help You

1 MINIMIZE TRAVEL

Wait until the storm has passed and road conditions improve. This ensures your safety and allows our snow removal team the space they need to safely and effectively maneuver snowplows. Excess vehicles on the road can hinder their ability to clear snow efficiently.



2 AVOID STREET PARKING

- Avoid parking on the street when possible.
- Stagger vehicles if you must park on the street.

3 CLEAR SIDEWALKS AND DRIVEWAYS

- Wait to shovel your driveway and sidewalk until the plowing operation is finished to avoid shoveling several times.
- Shovel the snow into your yard, not into the street.

4 KEEP STORM DRAINS CLEAR

- When snow melts, it flows into storm drains. However, if cars, snow and debris are blocking a drain the excess water can flood the street and create a dangerous situation if it freezes into ice. Avoid blocking storm drains.

5 KEEP HYDRANTS ACCESSIBLE

- Don't pile snow on fire hydrants.

6 STAY INFORMED

- For weather alerts follow snow removal updates via social media or the county website: [losalamosnm.us](https://www.losalamosnm.us)

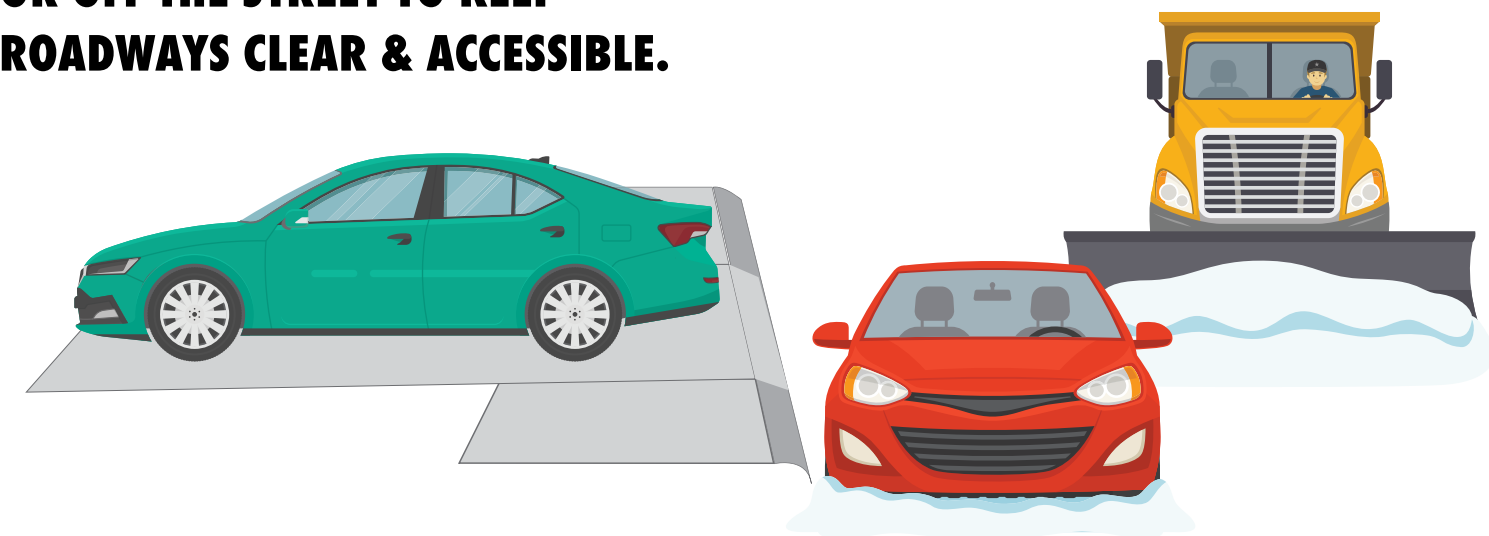
DO MOVE SNOW FROM YOUR DRIVEWAY OR SIDEWALK ONTO YOUR OWN PROPERTY.



DO NOT PUSH SNOW INTO THE ROADWAY OR RIGHT-OF-WAY. DO NOT PUSH SNOW ONTO PUBLIC DRAINS, AS THIS BLOCKS DRAINAGE FROM MELT.



DO PARK IN A DRIVEWAY OR OFF THE STREET TO KEEP ROADWAYS CLEAR & ACCESSIBLE.





Driving Tips for Snow and Ice

1 PREPARE YOUR CAR

- Keep your gas tank full to prevent ice from getting in the tank and fuel lines.
- Check tires and tire pressure.
- Check wipers and fill washer fluid.
- Make an emergency kit to keep in your car that includes water, snacks, blankets, flash light, charging cord, jumper cables, and a first-aid kit.

2 CHECK ROAD CONDITIONS

- View the [MyDrive](https://www.lacnm.com/snow) street cameras. [lacnm.com/snow](https://www.lacnm.com/snow)
- check the New Mexico Department of Transportation road conditions map online at [nmroads.com](https://www.nmroads.com).

3 ON THE ROAD

- Increase following distance to 4 to 6 car lengths to allow for plenty of time to stop for vehicles ahead of you.
- Avoid sudden braking or accelerating. Try to keep the car rolling, especially up hills, to maintain traction.
- Avoid cruise control in wintry conditions.
- Avoid driving in limited visibility conditions.
- Use low beams in heavy snow or fog.

4 AROUND SNOWPLOWS

- Stay back 4 to 6 car lengths from snowplows.
- Never pass a plow. It is safer to stay behind them on freshly cleared roads.
- Be patient; plows improve safety for everyone.

DO NOT FOLLOW TOO CLOSELY IN INCLEMENT WEATHER CONDITIONS.

DO AIM FOR A FOLLOWING DISTANCE OF 4 TO 6 CAR LENGTHS. THIS ALLOWS FOR ADDITIONAL TIME TO SLOW DOWN AND STOP ON ICY OR SLICK ROADS



DO NOT PASS SNOWPLOW TRUCKS. IT'S SAFER TO STAY BEHIND THEM ON FRESHLY CLEARED ROADS.

DO STAY BACK 4 TO 6 CAR LENGTHS FROM SNOWPLOWS.



CYCLING IN THE SNOW

Cycling in the snow is an exhilarating experience, but it also requires caution and preparation. Follow these tips to help you ride in inclement weather conditions safely:

- Choose the right bike, tire, & high-visibility lights
- Maintain your bike
- Plan your route
- Dress warm, stay dry & wear bright-colored clothing
- Be aware of road conditions
- Stay alert and be prepared
- Adjust your riding technique

1 WATCH FOR BLACK ICE

Be extra cautious of black ice, which is nearly invisible and extremely slippery. If you find yourself on black ice, try to keep the bike upright and avoid braking or turning.

2 RIDE IN TRACKS

Follow the tracks made by other vehicles, as these areas are often more compacted and offer better traction.

3 WATCH FOR PILES OF SNOW

Be mindful of snowbanks and piles that can obscure visibility or force you into traffic.

**MOTORISTS SHOULD
ALWAYS BE ON THE
LOOKOUT FOR BICYCLES
AND PEDESTRIANS
AND USE CARE
WHEN PASSING
OR APPROACHING
INTERSECTIONS.**





FAQs

1 WHY ISN'T MY STREET PLOWED YET?

- See the Los Alamos County Priority Maps: lacnm.com/PriorityMaps

2 WHAT SHOULD I DO IF MY DRIVEWAY IS BLOCKED BY PLOWED SNOW?

- Prevent your driveway from being blocked by snow by shoveling snow from your driveway and sidewalks into your yard. Shovel after the plowing is done.

3 WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR CLEARING SIDEWALKS?

- Residents are responsible for clearing sidewalks but are not legally required.



REPORTING PROBLEMS

Storm Response requires significant involvement from County staff across in Public Works, Los Alamos Police and Fire Departments, Community Services, and the Communications and Public Relations teams. Problems and requests sent to the Snow Response Team are logged, prioritized, and responded to according to urgency. We appreciate your patience during such times as we work to handle a wide variety of needs.

To discuss street-related issues, contact Traffic and Streets at 505.662.8113 or email lapw@losalamosnm.gov

For any other issues, contact the Customer Care Center at 505.662.8333 or email customercare@losalamosnm.gov

EMERGENCY CONTACTS

- Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. call the Traffic and Streets Division at 505.662.8113 or email at lapw@losalamosnm.gov.
- After hours and on holidays call Police non-emergency dispatch at 505.662.8222.
- In an emergency, call **9-1-1**

ONLINE TOOLS

- Los Alamos County Website: losalamosnm.us
- Los Alamos County Priority Maps: lacnm.com/PriorityMaps
- My Drive cameras and the snow removal webpage at lacnm.com/snow
- facebook.com/losalamoscounty
- losalamosnm.us/News-articles

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- New Mexico Department of Transportation: www.dot.nm.gov
- New Mexico Department of Transportation road conditions map online at nmroads.com
- National Weather Service: www.weather.gov

**THANK YOU
FOR YOUR COOPERATION!**

Together we can keep our roads and sidewalks
clear for a safer, smoother winter season!

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