



HARRISONBURG VA FRIENDLY BY NATURE



For Immediate Release – Jan. 22, 2026

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City of Harrisonburg Inclement Weather Tips

HARRISONBURG, Va. – As winter weather approaches, the City of Harrisonburg is encouraging community members to prepare for snow and icy conditions to ensure the safety of individuals, families and the community, as well as crews responding to the storm. Harrisonburg’s emergency management team, Harrisonburg Public Works (PW), the Harrisonburg Police Department (HPD) and the Harrisonburg Fire Department (HFD) provide the following guidance to help community members stay safe during winter weather events.

Important community updates will be posted to the City’s Facebook and X(Twitter) page throughout the duration of the storm and any cleanup following. Please check those pages for updates and questions when possible.



Preparing at Home:

- Stock essential supplies such as food, bottled water, medications, batteries and other necessities before a winter storm in case you are unable to leave home for multiple days.
- Prepare for potential power outages with flashlights, extra batteries, blankets, charging banks and warm clothing layers.
- Avoid using candles indoors for light or heat. Portable generators should be operated only outdoors, and more than 50 feet away from buildings, with proper ventilation.
- Check on your neighbors, especially those living alone or who may need special assistance preparing for inclement weather.
- Keep pets indoors during severe winter weather and ensure they have adequate warmth and supplies.
- Know how to manually open garage doors in the event of a power outage.

Travel Safety:

- Avoid unnecessary travel when roads are icy or snow-covered. Black ice can be difficult to see and may lead to accidents. Road condition updates will be posted to the City’s social media pages when available.
- If travel is necessary, clear snow and ice from your vehicle. Drive slowly, maintain a safe following distance, limit distractions and keep trips brief.
- Watch for snowplows and give them plenty of space. Plows may make frequent stops or travel at reduced speeds.
- Keep emergency supplies in your vehicle, including a flashlight, blanket, water, snacks and cell phone charger. If stranded, stay inside the vehicle, periodically run the engine for warmth, and ensure the exhaust pipe is clear of snow.
- Bridges, overpasses and shaded areas freeze first and may remain icy even when other roads appear clear.

Public Works Winter Operations:

- Do not park on the street during snow events to allow plows to clear roads safely and efficiently. Vehicles left on the street may delay snow removal and create hazards.
- Salt and de-icing operations are prioritized on main roads and high-traffic areas first. Residential streets may be treated later. View the route map at <https://www.harrisonburgva.gov/snow-plow>
- Snow removal operations may take several days to complete after major storms. We appreciate community members' patience.
- Community members are encouraged to use salt sparingly on sidewalks and driveways to avoid environmental runoff issues.

Snowplowing and Shoveling:

- Snowplows push snow to the side of the roadway; they do not remove it. Snow mounds are created each time plows pass, including the final pass after snowfall ends. Clearing snow mounds before the final plowing pass may result in additional snow being pushed back into driveways.
- If shoveling before the final pass, shovel snow to the right side of your driveway when facing the street. Clearing an area to the left of your driveway can also help reduce snow pushed back.
- Do not throw shoveled snow into the street. Depositing snow or ice into a plowed roadway creates safety hazards and is a violation of City Code Section 6-2-5. Please read the Public Works website for more snow removal tips: <https://harrisonburgva.gov/snow-plow#SnowRemovalfromDrivewaysTip>
- Community members, business owners and property owners are responsible for clearing snow from sidewalks adjacent to their property in accordance with City Code Section 6-1-15. Sidewalks must be cleared within 24 hours if snowfall is six inches or less, or 36 hours if snowfall exceeds six inches. Find more information at <https://harrisonburgva.gov/snow-plow#SidewalkSnowRemoval>
- Keeping sidewalks clear helps to ensure pedestrians and cyclists can travel safely without being forced into the street. Public Works prioritizes high-traffic and public facility areas for City sidewalk clearing.

Police Department:

- HPD implements inclement weather protocols during unsafe conditions, focusing on high-priority emergency calls. Non-emergency responses may be delayed.
- In emergencies, dial 9-1-1. For non-emergencies, call 540-434-4436. If the line is busy, continue calling until a communicator is available.

Fire Department:

- Clear a minimum 3-foot area around fire hydrants so firefighters can quickly access them during emergencies.
- Keep exit pathways clear of snow and ice to ensure safe evacuation if needed.
- Use heating equipment safely. Keep space heaters at least 3 feet away from flammable materials and never leave them unattended.
- Make sure smoke alarms and carbon monoxide (CO) alarms are installed on every level of your home and near sleeping areas, and check that they are functioning properly. Replace batteries as needed.

Utility Lines and Downed Trees or Signs:

- Stay away from downed power lines and any objects in contact with them. Do not attempt to drive over downed power lines or move them with tools or vehicles.
- Always assume lines are energized. Report downed power lines to Harrisonburg Electric Commission (HEC) at 540-434-5361.
- Report downed trees or signs blocking roadways to Public Works at 540-434-5928. Avoid attempting to remove large trees, limbs or signs yourself, especially during or immediately after a storm.
- Be cautious of hanging or partially fallen limbs or signs that may fall without warning.
- Keep children and pets away from storm debris, fallen trees, utility lines and damaged signs.

Additionally, please monitor the Harrisonburg Department of Public Transportation (HDPT) social media for bus route updates. Parks and Recreation's activity centers and staffed facilities may be closed, but some grounds will remain open. Visitors should use caution and be aware of weather hazards if they visit area parks until grounds are cleared.

The City of Harrisonburg is centrally located in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. It is home to approximately 56,879 people. More information about the City of Harrisonburg is online at www.HarrisonburgVA.gov.

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