

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Sunday, Dec. 21, 2008 - 11 a.m. update

Public Road Condition Inquiries: Call 5-1-1/ out of state callers call 1-800-695-ROAD (7623).

Freezing Rain and Blowing Snow Make for Treacherous Driving Conditions - Update on State Highway Closures and Operational impacts

OLYMPIA – The latest weather system continues to keep a tight hold on state highways across Washington with freezing rain producing very icy conditions in Western Washington and drier, drifting snow affecting visibility on the east side of the state. WSDOT crews have been working 24 hours a day to keep roads open for drivers.

Despite the widespread weather impacts, WSDOT only has a limited number of road closures and operational impacts as of 11 a.m. Sunday.

- I-90 Snoqualmie Pass [has just reopened](#) between North Bend and Ellensburg. Blowing, drifting snow and very poor visibility [had](#) made for dangerous driving conditions. Winds are decreasing and crews are working to clear drifts from the roadway.
- WSDOT is keeping both the I-90 and I-5 Express Lanes to Seattle inbound for the entire day. I-90 Express lanes will be westbound and I-5 Express Lanes will be southbound. This will ensure they are open for the Monday morning commute.
- SR 410 remains closed near Buckley due to a downed power pole. The road will remain closed until utility crews can assess the situation and implement a response.
- SR 14 is closed between Washougal and White Salmon through the Columbia River Gorge area. SR 14 had numerous snow slides and blowing snow.
- SR 401 in both directions is closed from US 101 to MP 9.00 before Knappton RD in Wahkiakum county due to fallen trees and snow and ice glaze.
- SR 165 is closed in both directions within the Fairfax Forest Preserve in east Pierce County until further notice due to avalanche potential
- The first sailing of the Port Townsend-Keystone Ferry run was cancelled Sunday morning and riders of all routes should expect possible disruptions because of rough seas and inclement weather. The public is to expect delays with all ferry runs and is asked to exercise caution in the terminal areas because of ice and snow in the holding areas and boat ramps. For up to date ferry information travelers can call 511 or check the WSDOT website.
- There are no Amtrak Cascades runs today, but Sound Transit is running its Seahawks shuttle on the Sounder Commuter trains

Crews continue to work quickly to reopen those roads and clear snow and ice from all routes.

"The Washington State Patrol and Department of Transportation are working to ensure road safety however there are many road closures and impassible areas," said Governor Christine Gregoire. "Please stay home, if at all possible. Mixed snow and rain will make for even slicker roads today. Less traffic makes clearing the roads easier for state and local crews and will reduce the potential for more spin-outs and accidents," she said.

"This weather system has challenged our crews in all corners of our state, " said WSDOT Transportation Secretary Paula Hammond. "We are using every possible resource to help people get around , but we need drivers help to drive safely in these slick and snowy conditions," she said.

WSDOT advises Western Washington motorists of extremely icy road conditions due to freezing rain. Those who must travel should be prepared for hazardous winter driving conditions. Combined with the ice and snow already on roads, drivers could see blizzard conditions in many places, especially mountain pass highways.

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Check www.wsdot.wa.gov/traffic/trafficalerts, for more detail about statewide highway incidents and closures.

Today's Seahawks game will add more vehicles to the road and people should plan ahead and take extra time to arrive at the game. WSDOT advises Seahawks fans to carpool or take alternative forms of transportation, like the bus or Sound Transit's commuter train.

WSDOT's 450 trucks are out clearing 20,000 lanes miles 24 hours a day, seven days a week. That is more than 1,000 people working around the clock, treating roads for snow and ice, plowing and putting down sand and salt.

Know Before you go:

- Get information from our Web site at www.wsdot.wa.gov before you leave your home or office.
- 511 - This driver information phone line provides current traffic, incident and closure information. TTY users can call 1-800-833-6388. Out-of-state callers can access the information at call 1-800-695-ROAD (7623).
- Mountain pass conditions are available at www.wsdot.wa.gov/traffic/passes/.
- At www.wsdot.wa.gov/winter, drivers can find WSDOT's winter driving-related information, including preparing a vehicle for winter driving, safe driving tips and mountain pass travel advisories. The WSDOT winter site also offers information about chains, winter tires and how WSDOT maintenance crews work in winter weather.
- On WSDOT's Web site, www.wsdot.wa.gov/traffic/weather, drivers can look roadway temperatures and see camera images from across the state.
- At www.wsdot.wa.gov/traffic/trafficalerts, a map shows highway incidents and closures.

We ask that customers on the Washington State Ferries Port Townsend/Keystone route check at 1-888-808-7977 or via the Web site at www.wsdot.wa.gov/ferries/commuter_updates/index.cfm?fuseaction=bulletins for wind-related notices and cancellations.

- Sign up for news. WSDOT offers subscribers more than 25 specialized e-mail alerts, including news and information for freight haulers, construction related traffic revisions, project updates from all around the state, and timely updates on pass conditions. Visit www.wsdot.wa.gov and click the link for "E-mail updates."
- Twitter users can add WSDOT to their personal accounts at: <http://twitter.com/wsdot/>. Go to www.wsdot.wa.gov/inform/twitter for more details.

On the Road:

- Overhead and roadside electronic signs
- Highway advisory radio - WSDOT advises drivers to program 530AM and 1610AM on your radio.

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WSDOT keeps people, businesses and the economy moving by operating and improving the state's transportation systems. To learn more about what we're doing, go to www.wsdot.wa.gov/news for pictures, videos, news and blogs. Real time traffic information is available at www.wsdot.wa.gov/traffic or by dialing 5-1-1.