



COUNTY ROAD ASSOCIATION OF MICHIGAN

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 30, 2011

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MDOT and CRAM remind motorists: "Snowplows Need Room to Groom!"

November 30, 2011 -- The Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) and the County Road Association of Michigan (CRAM) today announced an education campaign aimed at urging motorists to remember good driving habits in winter weather conditions, "Snowplows Need Room to Groom!"

"Road crews put their lives on the line every day to keep Michigan roads safe for everyone," said State Transportation Director Kirk T. Steudle. "Motorists must remember to drive with caution no matter how much salt we use or how often the roads are plowed."

A steady decrease in road funding and an increase in costs have forced state and local agencies to alter their winter maintenance plans and change plowing priorities. However, one important fact has not changed: road crews must have ample room in order to safely clear the many miles of roadway of snow and ice.

"Motorists must do their best to minimize distractions and focus on driving and changes in road conditions," John Niemela, CRAM director, said. "Every year, despite the flashing lights on snowplow trucks, poor driver behavior near snowplows leads to collisions that can be deadly."

MDOT and CRAM offer the following reminders for motorists:

- Snowplows have limited visibility and drivers cannot see directly behind their trucks;
- Snowplows often throw up snow clouds, reducing visibility on all sides of the truck;
- Distracted driving is dangerous driving. Motorists should not text or talk on cell phones while they are behind the wheel. In fact, texting while driving is illegal in Michigan;
- Motorists should never attempt to pass a moving snowplow on the right. With new wing-plow technology, the blade can clear the shoulder and the lane of travel simultaneously. Motorists

attempting an illegal pass through a snow cloud on the right and/or shoulder of the road most likely won't see the plow blade and run the risk of a serious crash; and

- Always wear your safety belt and allow extra time to reach your destinations this winter.

Stedle added, "For the safety of everyone, motorists should use extreme caution when traveling in winter weather conditions. We can't emphasize this enough: Snowplows Need Room to Groom!"

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MDOT reminds drivers: Snowplows need room to groom.

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Photos and safety tips are available at www.micountyroads.org/winter.php