



VDOT WINTER WEATHER RESPONSE

Overview of Northern Virginia District's Snow Operations

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Monica Bhatia: Deputy District Administrator

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April 8, 2025

Topics Covered

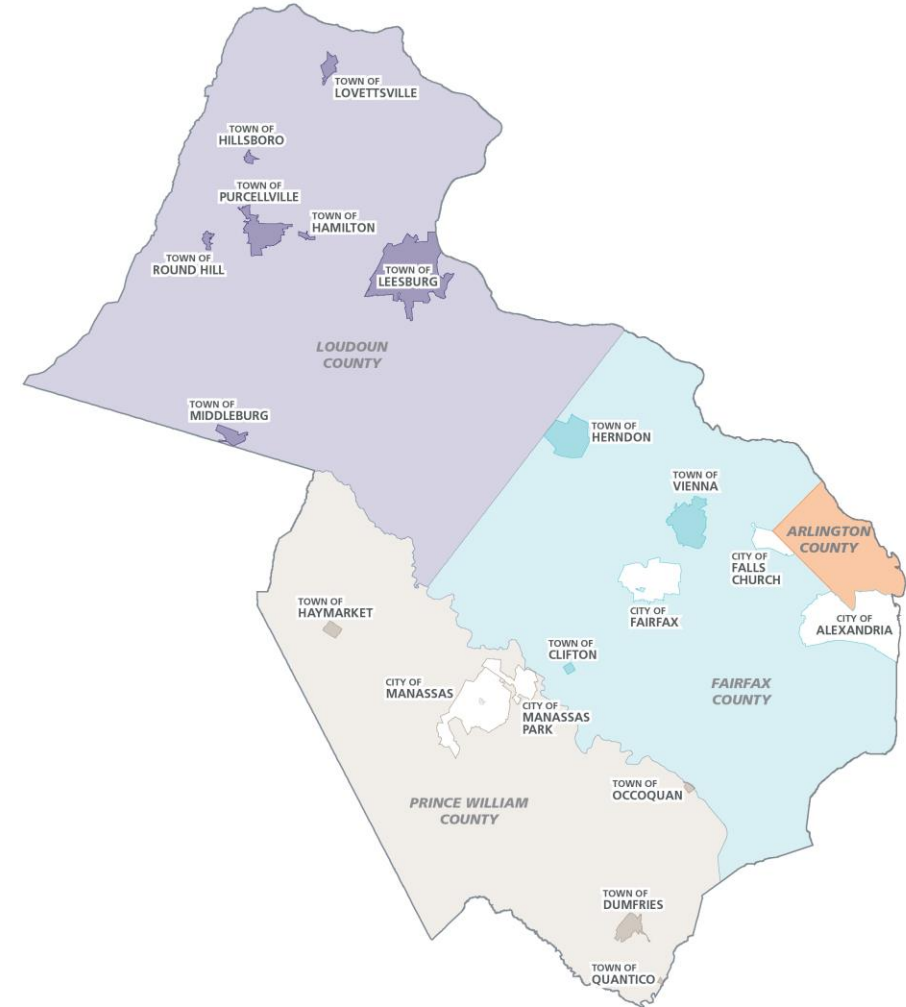
- **District Information**
- **Priorities and Process**
- **Planning and Execution**
- **Jan. 6 Response**
- **Expectations and Perception**
- **Moving Forward**



Snow mobilization at Merrifield area headquarters.

Northern Virginia District Information

- **District Lane Miles: 14,297**
 - **Interstate: 840**
 - **Primary: 1,711**
 - **Secondary: 11,677**
- **Number of Subdivision Streets: 16,544**



Historical Winter Weather Data: Snow Totals

Season	IAD	DCA
Average	21.0"	13.7"
2024-25	15.5"	14.9"
2023-24	11.7"	8.0"
2022-23	0.4"	0.4"
2021-22	15.8"	13.2"
2020-21	12.0"	5.4"
2019-20	2.9"	0.6"
2018-19	26.5"	16.9"
2017-18	11.9"	7.8"
2016-17	7.3"	3.4"
2015-16	34.3"	22.2"

LOW

HIGH



Braddock Green Court off of Braddock Road during Snowzilla in 2016.

Snow Operations Priorities

- **Public Safety**
- **Regional mobility and efficient functioning of entire transportation system**
- **Mitigate economic disruption**
- **Season: Starts in June, concludes in May**



Jan. 6, 1:14 p.m.: Interstate 66 plowing progress, 13 hours into snowstorm

Process

Priority Order:

- **Interstates:** I-66, I-95, I-395, and I-495 made passable, then bare pavement
- **High-volume roads:** Routes 1, 7, 50, 286, etc. made passable, then bare pavement
- **Subdivision roads:** Made passable, will not be bare pavement and generally do not receive chemical treatment

Additional Priorities:

- Shoulders, 24 park-and-ride lots, and access to Metro Stations and transit centers

Passable Definition



Snow Events Planning and Execution Steps

- **Weather Monitoring**
- **Resource Coordination (Equipment, Materials, Stakeholders)**
- **Public Messaging**
- **Mobilization**
- **Pretreatment**
- **Operational Response**
- **Demobilization**



VDOTers Chris Gallmetzer, Justin Anderson, and Anthony Kruppa at the District Equipment Shop.

January 6 Snowstorm

- **NWS Forecast: 5-10” amidst multi-day deep freeze**
- **Statewide emergency declaration**
- **Northern Virginia District:**
 - **Mob Level 5 (Highest)**
 - **3,000+ pieces of equip**
 - **Incident command activated (Fairfax rep involved)**

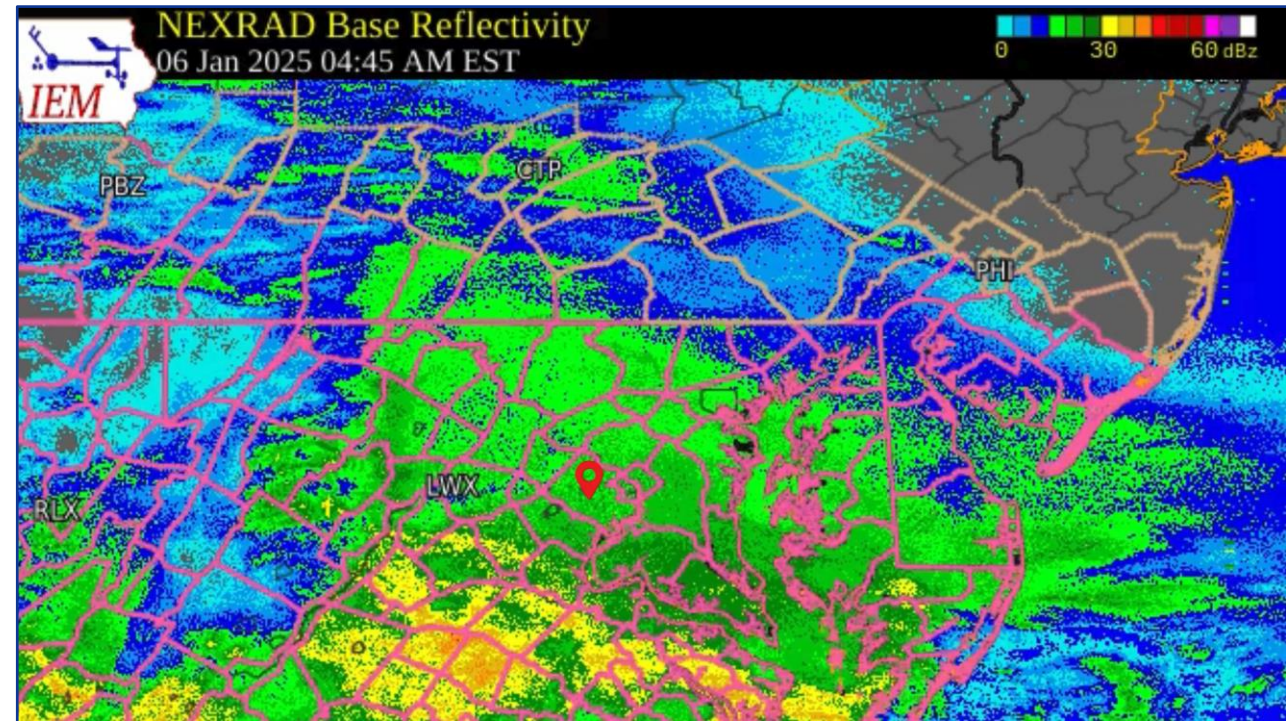


Jan. 6, 10:14 p.m.: Interstate 495 progress, 22 hours into snowstorm

January 6 Snow Event Weather Data

Temperatures			
Date	High	Low	Snow
Jan. 4	31	24	
Jan. 5	35	15	
Jan. 6	30	26	6.1-10"
Jan. 7	34	22	
Jan. 8	32	22	
Jan. 9	31	18	
Jan. 10*	33	19	
Jan. 11	36	25	

**Schools reopened*



**Three hours at or above freezing
Jan. 6-11. Very cold air preceded
the storm.**

Communications for January 6 Snow Event

Key Messages: expect a prolonged period of below-freezing temps, ice, stay off the roads, prepare for a multi-day response, what is passable in subdivisions



TV/Radio Interviews: 53


News Releases: 7

Tweets: 54

Facebook: 4

January 6 Snow Event Stakeholder Coordination

- Land Use Director shared messaging with elected officials
- Met with school system superintendents to determine needs
- Held virtual elected official status briefings for General Assembly and county board members



VDOT
NORTHERN VIRGINIA DISTRICT
WINTER WEATHER UPDATE

MONDAY, JANUARY 6 - PLEASE DO NOT TRAVEL

VDOT Northern Virginia District crews are working hard to treat roads as heavy snowfall continues to fall across the area much of today.

Residents are asked not to travel today so our crews can continue to work to make our area roadways passable. Please keep in mind there will be a multi-day response to this storm with freezing temperatures in the forecast the remainder of the week.

What's The Latest

- A **Winter Storm Warning** is still in effect for VDOT's Northern Virginia District and much of Virginia. Snowfall amounts of 5-10+ inches are currently forecast by the National Weather Service. Snowfall amount potential can be found on their [winter weather page](#). Please monitor forecasts closely for updates.
- Northern Virginia District Crews are now in push mode across area roads and will be making numerous passes as heavy snow continues. VDOT Northern Virginia has approximately 3,000 pieces of equipment at our disposal for this storm.
- Do not travel today unless absolutely necessary as dangerous driving conditions exist. If you must go out, make sure your vehicle is equipped with emergency supplies and give space to first responders and VDOT crews while they are out treating area roads. Familiarize yourself with these [winter driving tips](#).

January 6 Progress Timeline: First Pass Achieved

Interstates: 2 hours

Primaries: 1 hour

High-Vol Secondaries: 1 hour

**All completely done 12 hours
after last flake**

Subdivisions

- **Loudoun: 24 hours**
- **Prince William: 30 hours**
- **Fairfax: 36 hours**



VDOTer Jason Settle from Chantilly Area Headquarters.

Emergency Data – Fairfax DPSC

Data from Fairfax County DPSC, Jan. 6-11:

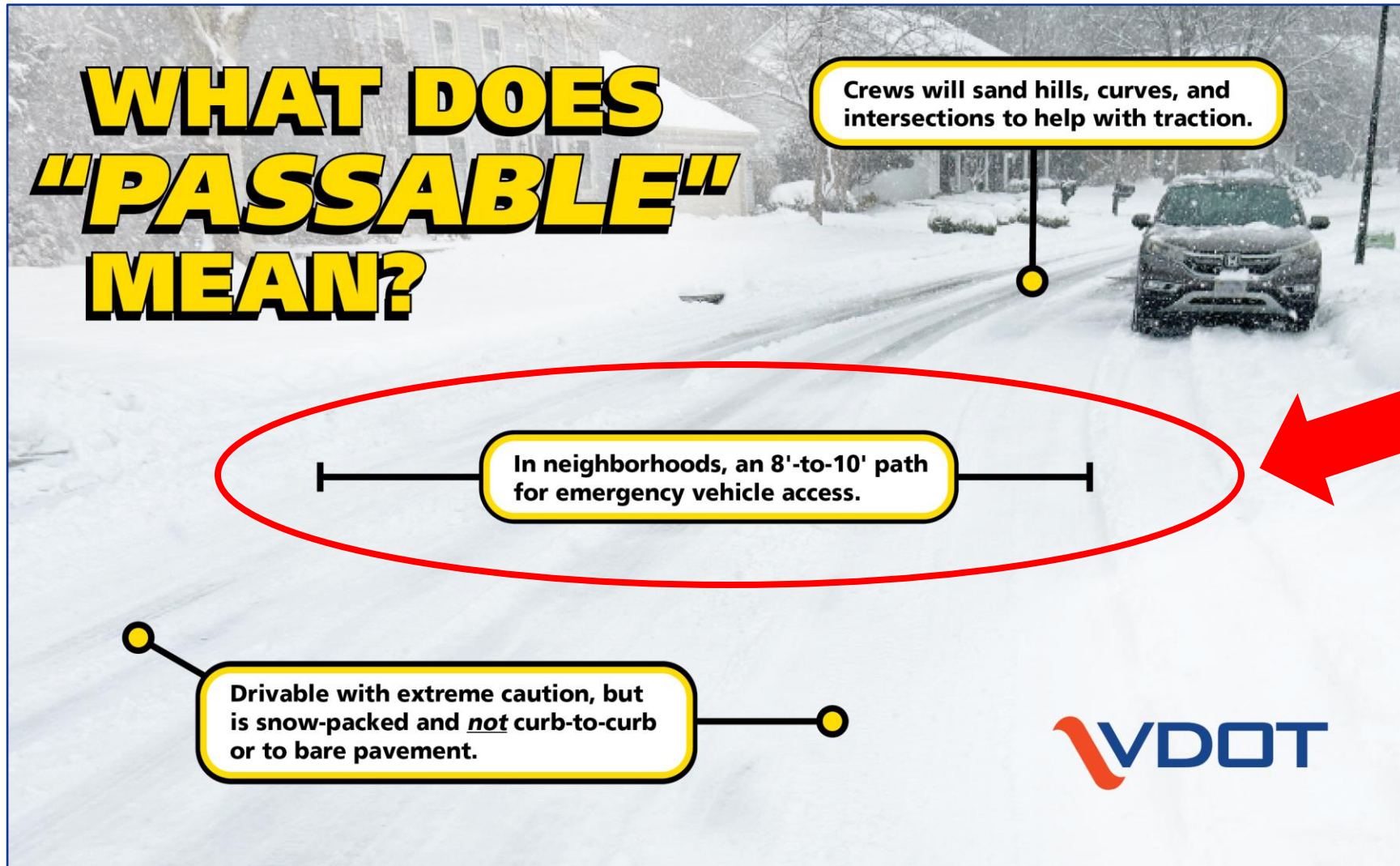
- Number of 9-1-1 calls via call takers: **5,989**
- Number of dispatches: **6,081**

Data from Fairfax Maintenance, Jan. 6-11:

- Number of requests from emergency services to VDOT due to impassable subdivision roads:

0

Passable Definition



Public Expectation?

National Weather Service shared that the first report of snow came at **12:13 a.m.** It was very light to start, but snow starting picking up in intensity and there was only one mile visibility by **1 a.m.** with higher snowfall rates through mid-morning.

First complaint to our Customer Service Center of a missed/unplowed road?

1:48 a.m.

Data – VDOT NOVA Customer Service Center

Resident contacts with the NOVA Customer Service Center include calls, web submissions, and emails.

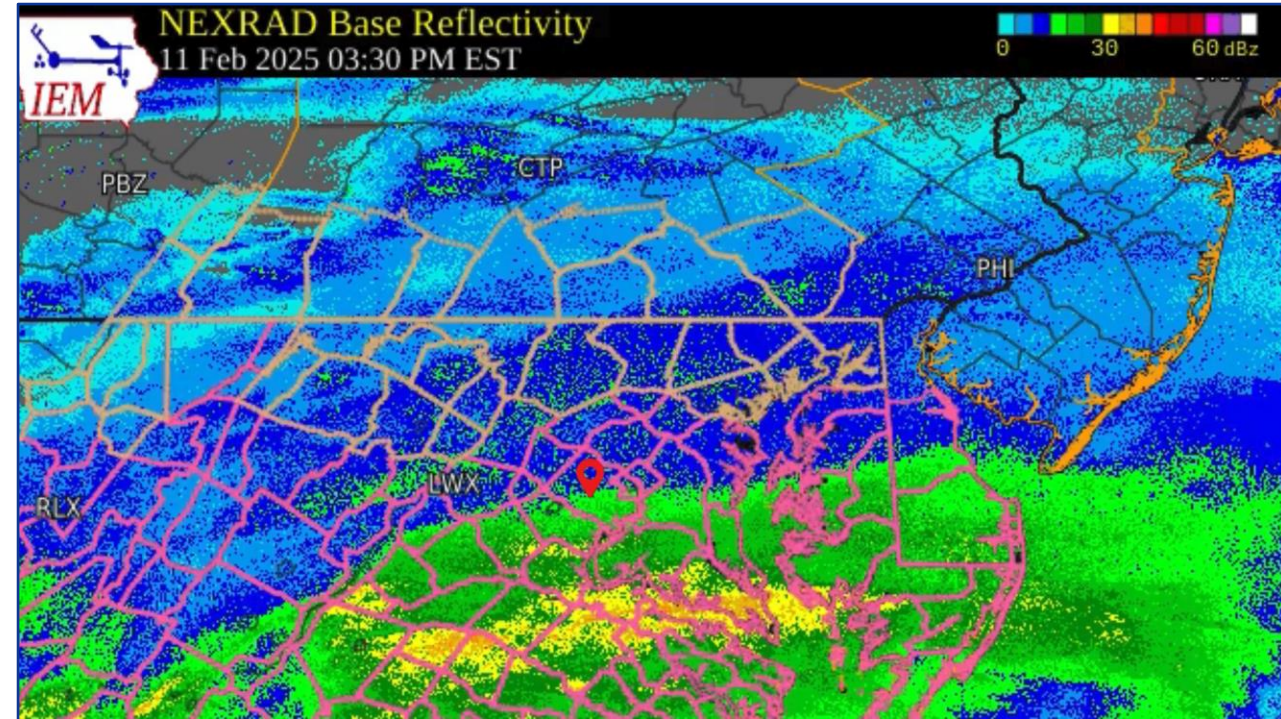
- Jan. 6-11: 4,973
- Feb. 10-12: 587



VDOTer Eugene Golemboski from McLean Area Headquarters.

February 11 Snow Event Weather Data

Temperatures			
Date	High	Low	Snow
Feb. 9	45	31	
Feb. 10	45	32	
Feb. 11	36	27	5.8-8.5"
Feb. 12	35	30	
Feb. 13	54	33	
Feb. 14	42	28	



**Many hours at or above freezing
Feb. 11-12. No deep freeze before
or after.**

Same Street Jan. 7 vs Feb. 13



Perception Comparison: Jan. 6 vs Feb. 11

January 6 Storm

Districtwide Equipment: 3,000; Pretreated: Yes

"Please explain why nothing has been done to clear snow and ice from neighborhood roads in Fairfax County and City of Alexandria. As a 30 year resident of Fairfax County I have never witnessed such incompetence. What happened? What is going on? If your intent is to anger voters, you are certainly doing an excellent job."

Perception Comparison: Jan. 6 vs Feb. 11 (Same Resident)

February 11 Storm

Districtwide Equipment: 2,700; Pretreated: Yes

"I wanted to thank you and VDOT for the early and effective snow plow services to the streets in our neighborhood this evening. The snow plow was a welcome sight as the snow was falling heavily on the ground. Well done. Thanks again."

Future VDOT Actions

- Continued focus on regional economy
- Continued coordination with school systems
- Ongoing messaging to elected officials and other stakeholders
- Updates to statewide plow tracker app



VDOTers Candace Trenum and Stanley Newman at 495 Interstate maintenance headquarters.

Moving Forward

- **Increased participation in annual snow briefing**
- **Share accurate info via our social media posts, Winter Weather Update emails**
- **Share prepackaged snow shareables/fact sheet (bitly.com/vdotnovasnow)**
- **Communications audit of VDOT info on Fairfax website**



VDOTer Jose Escalante from Leesburg Area Headquarters.

