



Marathon County Highway Department

Snowplow Safety

Did You Know?

According to **Wisconsin State Law**, vehicles must stay back a minimum of 200 feet behind a snowplow engaged in snow and/or ice removal on highways with a posted speed limit greater than 35 MPH. On highways having a posted speed limit of 35 MPH or less, vehicles must stay back a minimum of 75 feet and are not allowed to pass on the right.

(State Statute 346.915(2))



When you see a snowplow stopped, by **Wisconsin State Law**, you must stay at least 20 feet behind the plow and remain stopped until the snowplow resumes motion (346.915(3)). Often times, snowplows back up and vehicles closer than 20 feet are in their blind spot. This is especially true in intersections and on/off ramps. Remember, if you can't see their mirrors, they can't see you.

Keep a Safe Distance

During plowing operations, visibility can be reduced by blowing snow. Keeping a safe distance (minimum 200 ft) allows plow operators the space they may need to move over, or stop, for stranded vehicles or other hazards. Keeping a safe distance between your vehicle and the plow is very important in order to avoid accidents.

Give 'em Room

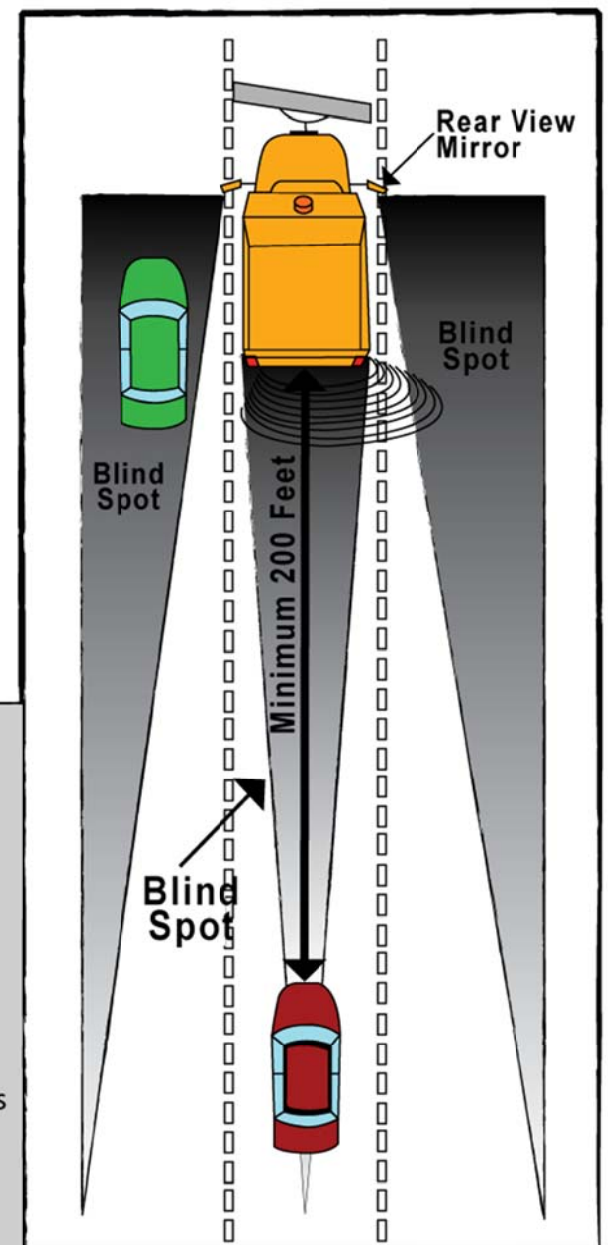
Allow plenty of room when around a snowplow. If you decide to pass, do not cut back into the lane ahead of the plow too quickly since the blade extends several feet ahead of the truck. Most snowplows are equipped with a "wing plow," which typically extends 10-12 feet off the side, or both sides, of the truck.

Slow Down or Move Over

Wisconsin law requires you to slow down or move over when approaching emergency or maintenance vehicles (346.072(1)(a)). This includes snowplows parked/stopped on the side of the road when they have their flashing lights turned on. If you approach a parked emergency or maintenance vehicle during a winter storm and decide to change lanes be extra careful. The passing lane may be in worse condition than the driving lane. There may also be a snow ridge between the two lanes. Avoid making an abrupt lane change.

Move Away From Centerline

When you see an approaching snowplow on an undivided highway, or passing on a divided highway, move as far away from the center line as you safely can. Use caution as blowing snow may obscure the actual width of the snowplow's blade. Also, remember snowplows with their side wings are wide vehicles and have a tendency to hug the centerline. Slow down and make sure to provide enough room.



The "Do's and Don'ts"

Don'ts

Don't stop too close (minimum 75 feet) behind a stopped snowplow. The driver could be preparing to back up and may not see you.

Don't pass a snowplow on the right by driving on the shoulder of the road. The snowplow's wing blade can extend up to 10 feet beyond the width of the truck.

Do's

Be Patient! Snowplows typically travel at speeds between 25-35 MPH. Leave room for the snowplows to do their job.

Buckle Up! Watch out for the snowplow blade along the centerline and leave plenty of room for stopping.

SNOW = SLOW