

# winterwise



## are you ready for winter weather?

Pierce County is gearing up for winter weather, and you should do the same.

The Pierce County Department of Emergency Management encourages you to take time now to create emergency kits for your home, car and workplace.

You should also create a family plan to identify an out-of-state emergency contact, where you will meet if your family is separated, etc.

Pierce County Planning and Public Works plays an important role in responding to winter weather. The department responds to roadway flooding, river flooding, windstorms and snow and ice events. It also manages storm cleanup.

### BE 'WINTERWISE'

At [piercecountywa.org/winterwise](http://piercecountywa.org/winterwise), you can learn about response efforts during winter weather, how to stay informed and how to prepare now for inclement weather or an emergency.

Sign up for Pierce County ALERT at [piercecountywa.org/alert](http://piercecountywa.org/alert) to receive notifications during an emergency.



## Stay Informed



[/PierceCountyPWU](https://www.facebook.com/PierceCountyPWU)



[@PierceCo](https://twitter.com/PierceCo)



Websites

[piercecountywa.org/winterwise](http://piercecountywa.org/winterwise)  
[blog.co.pierce.wa.us/emergency](http://blog.co.pierce.wa.us/emergency)  
[piercecountywa.org/alert](http://piercecountywa.org/alert)

## Contact Us

### ROAD MAINTENANCE REQUEST

 (253) 798-6000

 [piercecountywa.org/rfa](http://piercecountywa.org/rfa)

### REPORT RIVER FLOODING

 (253) 798-4274

 [piercecountywa.org/flood](http://piercecountywa.org/flood)

 [pcwater@co.pierce.wa.us](mailto:pcwater@co.pierce.wa.us)

### DOWNED TRAFFIC SIGNS

 (253) 798-8000

 [piercecountywa.org/traffic](http://piercecountywa.org/traffic)

 [pctraffic@co.pierce.wa.us](mailto:pctraffic@co.pierce.wa.us)



## FLOODING

# know your risk

Learn about free flood-related services for Pierce County residents at [piercecountywawa.org/flood](http://piercecountywawa.org/flood)

Flooding is the most common natural disaster in Pierce County. Flooding can impact anyone. Here's how you can prepare:

### KNOW YOUR PROPERTY'S FLOOD RISK

Contact your insurance agent or Pierce County Planning and Public Works to learn your property's flood risk.

Call (253) 798-2725 to request a flood map or visit [piercecountywawa.org/propertyfloodriskmap](http://piercecountywawa.org/propertyfloodriskmap).

### BUY FLOOD INSURANCE

Every property owner in Pierce County can buy flood insurance regardless of where they live. Homeowners insurance is not an alternative. Your agent can help you buy a flood insurance policy, which typically takes 30 days to become valid. Go to [floodsmart.gov](http://floodsmart.gov) for more information.

### PREP YOUR PROPERTY

Here are some tips:

- Keep storm drains clear of leaves and debris. Dispose of fallen leaves and yard debris properly—in compost areas, gardens or at your nearest transfer station.
- Direct downspouts away from your home or business and clear gutters of debris.
- Know how to safely turn off power and gas to your home.

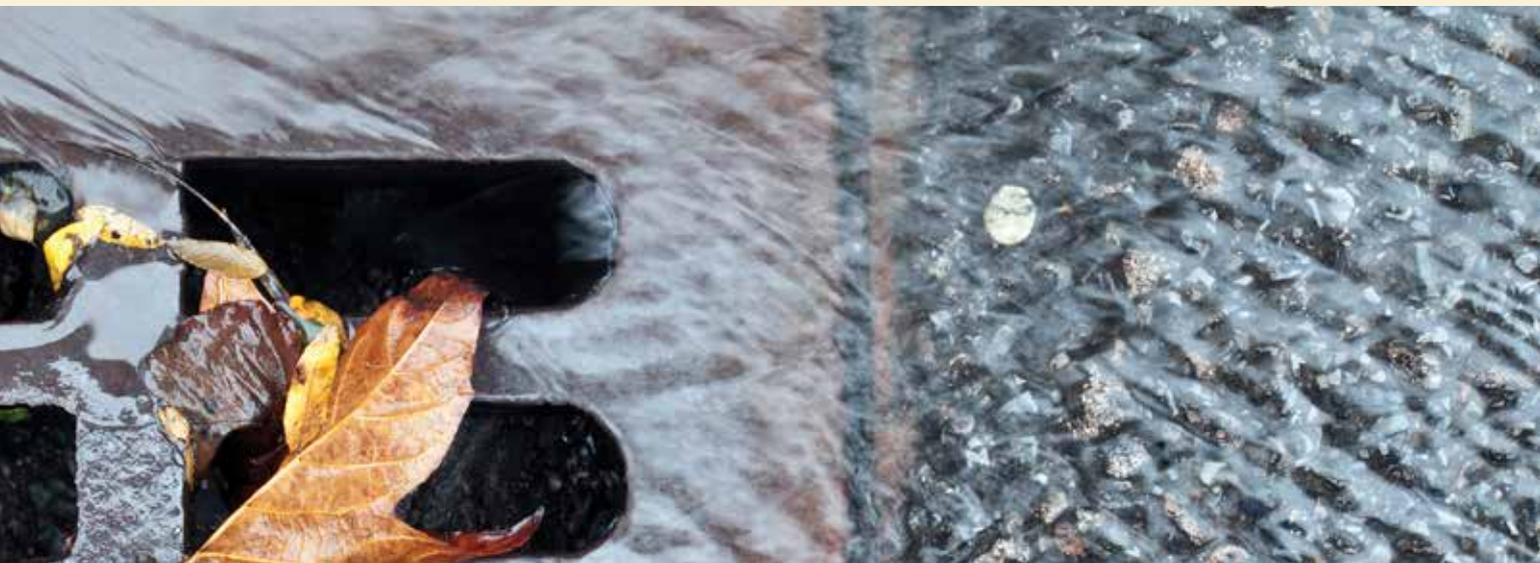


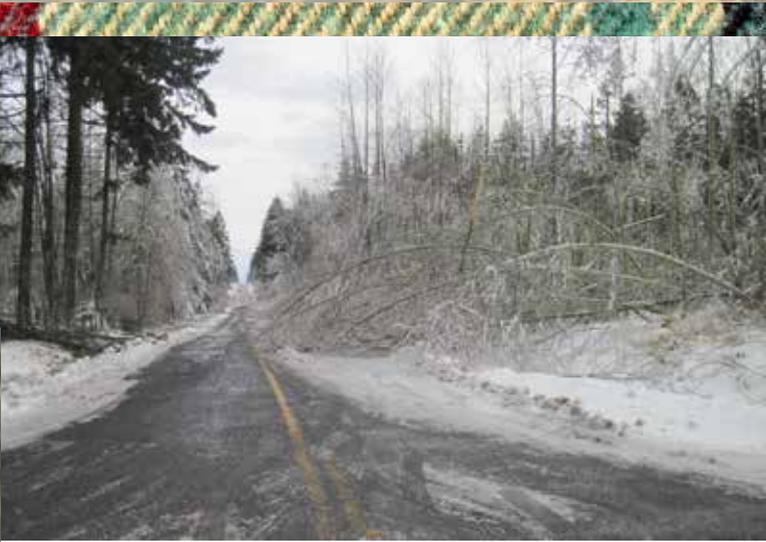
Coastal residents should secure loose items that are outside to prevent property damage or injuries during storm-driven waves or storm surges.

### STAY SAFE

Remember: Do not walk or drive through flood waters. Turn around and go back. You should not drive around "Road Closed" barricades.

Flooding is a very real threat in Pierce County. In recent years, flooding forced people to evacuate, required swift water rescues and damaged levees and infrastructure. Annually, Pierce County spends \$3.5 to \$4.5 million on repairs due to flooding.





## Winter on County Roads

Remember to exercise caution while driving during the winter season.

Vehicles should be in good working order and stocked with an emergency kit that includes items like blankets, warm clothes and non-perishable foods.

### OUR RESPONSE

Pierce County's key arterials connect residential areas to service centers and state highways.

These major roads are our priority during a snow and ice event, along with Pierce Transit and school bus snow routes.

If you can get out of your neighborhood and reach a key arterial, you will likely find a drivable road.

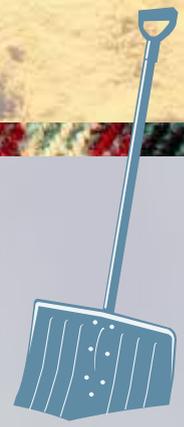
The level of service these major roads receive during winter weather is determined by several factors, including weather conditions, the classification of the roadway and available resources.

When a severe winter storm is forecast, our plan provides that crews apply anti-icing products to key arterials and lifelines routes assuming all resources are available.

If heavy snowfall affects roads countywide, plow trucks with de-icing materials are deployed 24 hours a day when all resources are available until conditions improve.

## CLEANUP INFO

# storm debris



An official declaration of emergency must occur before any cleanup program can begin. We will make announcements about what to do with your yard debris after a storm.

Don't place storm debris at the curb or along the road. It is unsafe and illegal to dump storm debris into public rights-of-way, stormwater facilities or other public property.

## Windstorms

Windstorms can wreak havoc on county roadways. Our road crews will remove downed, leaning or damaged trees and debris along county roads.

Priority is given to major arterials that connect residential areas to service centers and state highways, along with Pierce Transit and school bus snow routes.

If you see a downed tree or debris blocking the road or a sidewalk, please submit a Request for Action at [piercecountywa.org/rfa](http://piercecountywa.org/rfa) or call (253) 798-6000.

### DOWNED SIGNS & TRAFFIC SIGNAL OUTAGES

We replace missing or downed stop and yield signs 24 hours a day. Call (253) 798-8000 to report a sign or traffic signal concern.

If a traffic signal is out, treat the intersection as a four-way stop.

### POWER OUTAGES & DOWNED POWER LINES

If there is a power outage at your home or business, contact your local energy utility or visit their website for more information.

If you see a downed power line, stay away from it and report it to your energy utility or call 911. Remember that even downed lines can be energized.



More information about our winter response is available at [piercecountywa.org/winterwise](http://piercecountywa.org/winterwise)



## KEEP STORM DRAINS CLEAR

# reduce flooding

The potential for flooding along county roads increases as the rain returns and leaves fall.

Significant rainstorms may cause roadside storm drains and ditches to overflow and flood the roadway. River flooding may also affect our roads. As rain saturates the ground, there is also an increased risk of downed trees and landslides.

Our road crews will clear drainage systems, downed trees and landslides when possible, close roads or lanes if they are not passable and clean drainage systems to proactively reduce flooding.

You should not drive through standing water, near downed trees or utility lines or around road closure barricades.

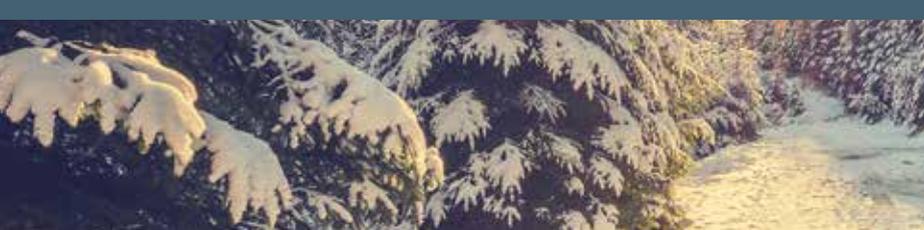
### HOW YOU CAN HELP

You can help reduce flooding on our roads by picking up yard waste on your property and making sure nearby storm drains are free of leaves.

Take the following actions:

- Put leaves and other yard debris in yard waste bins for pick up. Find transfer stations where you can drop off yard waste at [piercecountywa.org/yardwaste](http://piercecountywa.org/yardwaste).
- If it can be done safely, remove leaves from storm drains with a rake.
- For Pierce County roadways: If a blockage can't be cleared, the roadway is flooding or a storm drain is on a busy road, call (253) 798-6000 or submit a Request for Action at [piercecountywa.org/rfa](http://piercecountywa.org/rfa).

Residents in cities and towns should contact their local public works department to report flooding or storm drain problems.



## Winter Celebrations

It's the time of year for family and friends to gather together.

As you whip up a big meal or go on a cleaning spree, please keep your sewer pipes in mind!

### FATS, OILS AND GREASE

Fats, oils and grease can coat and clog pipes and cause your sewer line to back up into your home. If you are on a septic system, cooking oils can clog your pipes or drainfield. To prevent this problem, follow these guidelines:

- Never pour oil or grease down the drain. Instead, scrape grease into a disposable container and put it in the garbage.
- After scraping, wipe out pans with a paper towel to remove the last of the grease.
- Scrape plates and put greasy food scraps in the garbage.
- Keep strainers in your sink to catch solids before they go down the drain.

### WIPES

Many household cleaning wipes and hygiene towelettes are labeled as disposable and flushable.

The truth is these wipes can clog the sewer line on your property and cause blockages and service problems in the public sewer system and pump stations.

Unlike toilet paper, these products don't break down once they are flushed.

Save yourself and our sewer system from costly repairs, and throw these wipes in the trash.

Pierce County Executive: Bruce F. Dammeier

Pierce County Council:

Doug Richardson, Chair

Connie Ladenburg, Jim McCune, Dan Roach,  
Pam Roach, Rick Talbert, Derek Young