



Highway Maintenance Manual
Chapter 06 Winter Maintenance
Section 05 Road Classifications
Subject 05 Frozen Road Declaration

Bureau of Highway Maintenance
January 2018

1.0 Authority

Under Wis. Stats. Section [348.175](#), when the department determines that the state highways are frozen to the extent that no damage to them may result from the transportation of peeled or unpeeled forest products cut crosswise (excluding woodchips) or abrasives or salt for highway winter maintenance in excess of the limitations under Wis. Stats. Section, [348.15](#), the Department shall declare highways within areas of the state are eligible for increased weight limitations.

It is the responsibility of the officers or agencies in charge of maintenance of highways to make such a declaration. The Bureau of Highway Maintenance can make this declaration only with regard to the state maintained highway system. The Frozen Road Declaration for county or local roads must be made by the local agency having maintenance authority of those roadways.

2.0 Procedure

1. As freezing temperatures begin to enter the state, the Meteorologist in the Bureau of Highway Maintenance will begin monitoring frost models and subsurface temperature readings to estimate when frozen road conditions will occur. Roads will be declared frozen zone by zone when frost depth reaches 18 inches below the pavement surface throughout the zone.
2. As the estimated date approaches, the Meteorologist will review Roadway Weather Information System data and request frost tube readings from regional maintenance supervisors. Frost tube should be checked on Mondays and reported to BHM until each respective zone is declared frozen.
3. On the first day that conditions warrant declaring a zone or zones as frozen, the Bureau of Highway Maintenance shall publish a declaration of frozen roads. Each declaration shall be effective as of 12:01 a.m. on the 2nd day following the declaration.
4. Mid-Season Thaw: Throughout the frozen road period, there may be periods of thaw when the ground immediately below the pavement structure is no longer frozen. In order to protect the pavement structure, the Department may temporarily declare [Seasonal Posted](#) and/or [Class II roadways](#) restrictions. Each declaration shall be given a 24-hour notice prior to becoming effective.
5. If at any time the Frozen Road Declaration is in effect, the department determines that the period should be ended, a declaration shall be provided. Each declaration shall be given a 24-hour notice prior to becoming effective.
6. All declarations to frozen road conditions shall be published on the Department's Internet website, issued as press releases by the Department's Office of Public Affairs and available via a recorded message at (608) 266-8417.
7. Additional information on this procedure can be found in the [Decision Process](#) document.

3.0 Distribution of the Frozen Road Declarations and Updates

The following should be notified by the Bureau of Highway Maintenance of the declaration on an annual basis:

1. Division Administrator
2. Division Director-Statewide Bureaus
3. Division Operations Director - Regions
4. County Highway Commissioners
5. Department Office of Public Affairs

6. Bureau of Traffic Operations.
7. Division of Motor Vehicles - Motor Carrier Services Section
8. Division of State Patrol
9. Great Lakes Timber Producers Association of Michigan and Wisconsin (G.L.T.P.A)
10. Wisconsin Professional Loggers Association
11. Forest Industry Safety Training Alliance (F.I.S.T.A.)
12. Wisconsin Motor Carriers Association
13. Individual freight organizations as appropriate