



TOWN OF HAWLEY
WINTER ROADS
PRIMER
2020 EDITION

GARY MITCHELL is Hawley's Highway Boss. Additional winter players at the Highway Garage are Chris Tirone, Ted Palmer, and Mike Schofield.

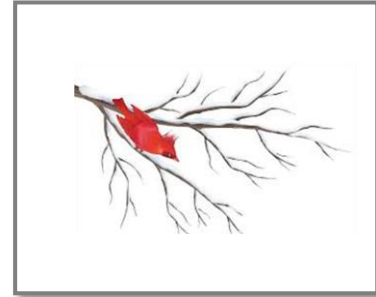
WINTER ROADS TID BITS

*THE **Winter** WORLD ACCORDING TO GARY*

1. Some towns have a “bare road policy” – Gary, the road boss, says the state operates this way. They aim to keep the roads bare at all times. Hawley is **not** one of them. If your vehicle is properly equipped for winter driving in the snow/ice, you'll be okay here in most storms. Keeping roads bare is *impossible* in Hawley. To do this it would take double the labor, double the trucks, double the chemicals on the roads and into the vegetation/ water table, and also a miracle. Gary only uses a small amount of salt in the sand to keep the mixture pliable. Salt is very costly, has environmental consequences, and only functions as designed at certain temperatures. It's a smart and necessary decision.
2. High beams are dangerous and annoying (especially the new LED ones) – even to plows and sanders. Snow and ice on the roads makes this factor even worse. Please remember to give all drivers a break. And if you do try to pass the plow/sander, keep this in mind – plowing is unpredictable. Despite the highway team's best skills and intentions, if the plow were to hit an unseen object in the pavement or on the side of the road, it can shift these huge trucks suddenly out into the road! VERY bad when a car is passing, especially on Hawley's many narrow, windy roads.
3. During a storm, Gary is in touch with County Dispatch in Shelburne constantly. Even when the weather is calm, he is on call at all times no matter where he is to get

notifications of worsening weather, hazards such as trees down, and accidents. He carries a cell phone (for times/places where a cell works in Hawley), as well as a radio. If a branch is down, he'll likely know it; if someone has slid off the road into a bank, ditto. Gary also accesses radar maps frequently to track a storm however big or small – this gives him more information to plan what gets done (sanding.....plowing....) and when it gets done.

4. A plow/sander truck can get stuck as well as cars can, primarily due to ice. Gary has tales of sliding plows and sliding plow guys on Hawley's hilly wooded terrain. And sometimes trucks and equipment also break down and need repair, at the most unfortunate of times.



5. You might think that the more snow there is, the worse the problem. But the reality from Gary's seat is that the more **extreme temperature fluctuations** there are, the more challenging the management of winter roads is! When winter was **PURE WINTER**, from December straight through to April, things were more predictable. Lately, winter temperatures have been more up and down, with rain or ice being as frequent as snow. As with most things in life, it's just plain NOT SIMPLE! Here's one small example of this – sand put down by the crew can often just wash away instead of staying put and then traffic moves it around to places where it's no longer useful. ARRGGGH.
6. Each location on the roads has its unique treatment needs. Factors that come into play:
 - ***elevation of the location** at any given time, and temperature, humidity, and wind speed can all make a difference;
 - * whether the road is **dirt or paved** (dirt roads freeze first);
 - * whether the road is **shaded or open**;
 - * and the **amount of traffic** on the road.
7. Much of what Gary does is preparation - management of the equipment and crew to be ready for the next event – but just as much of handling a winter storm event is figuring it out on the fly. He uses his experience, his knowledge of our roads and how his equipment and supplies work, and consults with road crews in other towns. And then he watches and anticipated the weather. All that said, he and his crew are NOT magicians. And they appreciate your patience and understanding.

Please be mindful of this plain fact - **YOUR OWN PREPARATION IS THE BEST INSURANCE** against unexpected problems, large or small. Please do what you can

to keep yourself and your neighbors safe. Equip your vehicle with good seasonal tires, and keep the vehicle clear of snow and ice for your own visibility and the safety of others on the road.

The Highway Garage direct number is 413-339-5509. The Department will be happy to hear your appreciation, concerns, and your suggestions.



and

SAND

Sand is available from the Hawley Highway Garage at 247 W. Hawley Road. Bring your own bucket & shovel and access from the sand/salt shed. If you are unable to do this due to disability or age, call the Garage at 339-5509 to arrange for a drop off.