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**MDOT Bay Region**

**Tow Plow**

**Fact Sheet**

**What is the Tow Plow?**

The Tow Plow is essentially a new type of steerable trailer-mounted snowplow that is towed by a standard plow truck. The Tow Plow is able to swing out to the right side and plow up to two full lanes in one pass.

**How is the Tow Plow different from the regular plow on a truck?**

The Tow Plow has the capability of clearing two lanes of travel instead of just one. It does not have a motor and is attached behind and to the side of a standard plow truck. The Tow Plow also is equipped with a salt spreader and/or attachment to spray salt brine for pre-treatment, which are mounted on the plow. All controls for the Tow Plow and its accessories are mounted within the cab of the plow truck.

**How does the Tow Plow increase efficiency?**

The Tow Plow improves efficiency by replacing a truck that would normally be in the plow train formation. It also does not use fuel, so there are no extra vehicle emissions. By using this machine, crews can clear two travel lanes in one pass, thus reducing the time and cost to clear the freeway during a winter storm event. The Tow Plow also will save on equipment and personnel costs by enabling one plow operator to accomplish the work of two. This will improve service while reducing labor costs and fuel consumption on busy roadways with high traffic volumes.

**Do truck drivers need additional training to operate the Tow Plow?**

In addition to standard winter operations training, maintenance personnel from the region's Saginaw East Side Garage received specialized training to operate the Tow Plow.

**Has the Tow Plow been used in other nearby states, or is this a totally new process?**

The Tow Plow is being successfully used in 20 other states, including Missouri, Minnesota, Maine, Wisconsin, Utah, and Ohio.

**What sparked the decision to begin using the Tow Plow?**

MDOT is using this new snow clearing technique and equipment to increase efficiency and effectiveness in winter operations.

**How many tow plows will be used in the state? In which counties will they be used?**

MDOT purchased one Tow Plow last year that was successfully tested on I-96 and US-23 in Livingston County near Brighton, on I-75 and US-2 in Mackinac County, and on I-94 in Kalamazoo and Portage in Kalamazoo County. One Tow Plow is permanently stationed in Brighton. This summer, MDOT purchased three additional tow plows that will be stationed in St. Ignace, Saginaw and Grand Ledge. The Saginaw Tow Plow will primarily be used on I-75 in Saginaw County.

**How much does a Tow Plow cost? How does it compare to an MDOT dump truck with plow?**

The cost of the new Tow Plow is $93,000, which is approximately half the cost of a standard MDOT snowplow. With regular maintenance, the Tow Plow has an average service life of 30 years, compared to a 10-year average for a standard plow.

**What else do I need to know about MDOT's Tow Plow?**

MDOT reminds drivers that motorists should keep a safe distance between their vehicles and snowplows. Other winter safety driving tips can be found at [http://michigan.gov/mdot/0,4616,7-151-9615---,00.html](http://michigan.gov/mdot/0%2C4616%2C7-151-9615---%2C00.html).

For more information on MDOT's Tow Plow, call MDOT Associate Region Engineer Gregg Brunner at 989-239-4199, or visit [www.michigan.gov/mdot/0,4616,7-151-9621\_11008-291327--,00.html](http://www.michigan.gov/mdot/0%2C4616%2C7-151-9621_11008-291327--%2C00.html).

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