

RTD service is prepared for major snowstorm heading to the metro area this weekend

Agency staff is taking all precautions to be ready to safely deliver services when the snow begins

DENVER (March 11, 2021) – The Regional Transportation District (RTD), like the rest of the region, is bracing for a big spring storm. With March being the snowiest month in the metro area, the agency is making preparations to vehicles and facilities as early as this evening for the possibility of two feet of snow along the Front Range.

Bus

Street operations will provide extra staff for both dispatch and street supervision. Extra dispatchers can address increased call volume, attempt to reduce response time and relay information about problem areas. Additional street supervisors can ensure that buses that become stuck and accidents due to snow are addressed quickly, and they can monitor bus stops for customers. Generally, on snow days, service can be delayed by 10-30 minutes depending on the severity of the storm. RTD buses are navigating through the same traffic and road conditions as personal vehicles, so passengers are asked to be patient and leave as early as possible for their destinations. Bus drivers receive annual training that includes preparing for driving safely on icy or snow-packed roads.

Rail

Rail may experience some delays, too, because of freezing wire and track switches or reduced speeds due to safety. Light rail will be running “sweep trains” – two on the W Line, two on the R Line, then southwest through downtown – throughout the night to keep the overhead wires from icing up, so the wires are clear for morning service pullout. Additionally, maintenance will have mechanics staged along the alignment in case there are mechanical issues. Maintenance is told to monitor switches and switch heaters. Train operators are instructed how to operate vehicles if they experience certain conditions on the overhead catenary wires (OCS) to help clear ice buildup.

On commuter rail, RTD and rail contractor staff for commuter rail facilities and maintenance of way monitor and maintain roadway and pedestrian crossings, and they assist the snow removal contractor from time to time for commuter rail facilities. Commuter rail staff also run multiple trips during non-revenue hours to keep the overhead wires clear of ice and snow.

Staff members exercise track switches and monitor heaters to ensure that track switches and wires do not freeze or build up with snow. They also monitor the pantographs, the equipment that connects the train to the overhead wires, and respond to OCS issues if they see freezing and snow buildup. The vehicle maintenance team will also have mechanics staged in case there are mechanical issues.

Facilities

Planning for a storm begins 24 hours ahead of time, when the RTD facilities maintenance manager checks the weather reports issued by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and asks each of three

ABOUT RTD

The Regional Transportation District develops, operates and maintains a public transportation system that meets the transit needs of close to 3 million people within an eight-county service area in the Denver Metro region. RTD’s buses, rail lines, shuttles and additional services provide approximately 100 million annual passenger trips. For more information, visit rtd-denver.com, call 303-299-6000 and follow along on social media: www.facebook.com/RideRTD, [@RideRTD](https://twitter.com/RideRTD) on Twitter, [@ridertd](https://www.instagram.com/ridertd) on Instagram and [rideRTDco](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCv8v8v8v8v8v8v8v8v8v8v8) on YouTube. For the most current RTD news, visit the News Stop, at rtd-denver.com/news-stop.

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facilities groups to outline a plan for snow removal. Not counting this coordination, the work itself can take several days: moving snow during the actual event, then patrolling and treating areas afterward as the freeze-thaw cycle sets in. It is not uncommon for the latter type of work to extend two or three days after a snowstorm.

The members of the snow-removal team are now planning their shifts and schedules for the storm. They will be checking and staging equipment for the next couple of days. They expect crews to be working overtime, and to be scheduling higher-than-normal levels of personnel over the weekend to stay ahead of the storm as much as possible.

Safety is a core value at RTD, and travel on snowy days sometimes takes a little longer. RTD's ultimate goal to get everyone safely to their destinations. Customers should do their part by planning ahead and staying informed. Also, customers should continue to practice social distancing and wear a mask, as it is a federal and state mandate. The best way to keep up to date on storm impacts is to follow the RTD Twitter account, at [@RideRTD](#), and to sign up for [Rider Alerts](#). More information about RTD [snow preparations](#) and [facilities snow removal](#) can be found on the News Stop on RTD's website.

