



AORS
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

AORS Urges Respect for Municipal Public Works Operators Amid Severe Winter Conditions

ONTARIO — As winter storms continue to impact communities across Ontario, the Association of Ontario Road Supervisors (AORS) is calling on the public to treat municipal public works employees with respect while they carry out critical snow and ice control operations.

AORS has received feedback from municipalities across the province reporting incidents of harassment and verbal abuse directed at frontline public works staff during and following recent winter storms. The association stresses that this behaviour is unacceptable and undermines the essential work being done to keep communities safe.

“Municipal plow operators are working long hours in difficult and often dangerous conditions, navigating severe storms, reduced visibility, and equipment challenges — all while doing their best to keep roads passable,” said **Karla Musso-Garcia, CRS-I**, President of AORS and Operations Manager for the Township of Oro-Medonte. “This winter has been particularly challenging, with repeated storm events and a provincewide salt shortage adding to the complexity of operations. These employees are part of the communities they serve, and they deserve patience, respect, and appreciation — not harassment.”

Municipal public works employees are responsible for clearing roads that allow residents to get to work, children to get to school, and essential services to function. Their role becomes even more critical during severe weather events.

“In a winter storm, municipal plow operators are often the first line of response,” said **Kelly Elliott**, Interim Executive Director of AORS. “They are the ones emergency services rely on to access roads, reach hospitals, and respond to urgent calls. Police, fire, and paramedic services regularly depend on municipal equipment operators for assistance. In many cases, their work can make the difference when seconds truly count.”

AORS is also reminding the public that safe winter driving behaviour plays a key role in protecting both road users and the workers operating heavy equipment.

Tips for sharing the road with snow plows include:

- Give plows plenty of space and never tailgate
- Be aware that snow plows may need to **slow down, stop, or back up at intersections**
- Never assume a plow operator can see you — visibility can be limited due to equipment size, snow spray, and weather conditions

- A good rule of thumb: **if you cannot see the snow plow's mirrors on both sides, the operator cannot see you**
- Do not attempt to pass a plow unless it is safe and legal to do so

If residents have concerns about snow or ice removal in their community, AORS encourages them to contact their local municipality directly through established customer service channels, such as municipal websites or service request systems. Frontline operators are not responsible for policy decisions and should not be the target of frustration.

"Respect on the road keeps everyone safer," added Musso-Garcia. "A little patience goes a long way during winter weather."

AORS extends its appreciation to municipal public works professionals across Ontario who continue to work tirelessly during challenging winter conditions to keep communities moving and safe.

About AORS

The Association of Ontario Road Supervisors (AORS) represents municipal public works professionals across Ontario, providing training, advocacy, and professional development to support safe, efficient, and sustainable municipal infrastructure.

Media Contact:

Kelly Elliott

Interim Executive Director

Association of Ontario Road Supervisors

E-Mail: kellyelliott@aors.on.ca Tel : (519) 873-0374