

NEWS

▼ WEATHER

Snowfall kicks road clearing into high gear

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The first major snowfall of the season last week not only sent vehicles slipping and sliding on Central Okanagan roads.

It also sent Kelowna city road crews scrambling to deal with the suddenly deteriorating road conditions.

Last Wednesday afternoon, city crews were out in full force as roads became ice rinks and a flurry of accidents were reported.

“It was a bad storm because the surface temperature of the road made it perfect for creating ice and that was an issue even for some of our professional drivers,” said Stephen Bryans, operations supervisor for the city.

Police reported six snow-related accidents in a 90-minute time that afternoon, mostly on the Westside.

Nine vehicles went off the road on a residential street in Shannon Lake, a transit bus slid into the ditch on Highway 97 and a pick-up truck overturned on Westside Road. No serious injuries were

reported but there was many more minor accidents.

Bryans said Kelowna has 26 trucks, three graders and the services of nine contractors at its disposal to deal with snow on roads this winter.

Roads considers priority one and an two (main arterial roads such as Glenmore Drive, as well as local connector roads such as Richter Street, and bus routes, schools zones, are cleared of snow first, normally within six hours and other roads with in 12 hours.

This year, the city has budgeted \$1.4 million for snow removal, but Bryans said whatever the cost, the city has no choice but to keep its roads clear.

In addition to clearing roads of snow, the city also requires people to keep the sidewalks in front of the businesses and homes clear of snow.

It has a Snow Buster program that encourages people who can shovel snow to help those who cannot. Snow Busters can be nominated for prizes at the city’s website.

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