

WINTER DRIVING ON THE MOUNTAIN

If you are new to High Knob, you must realize by now that driving the steep slopes in snow and ice requires a different level of preparedness. Studded snow tires and four-wheel drive are an absolute must, particularly in the high elevations. Chains are the ONLY option in ice storms unless you walk, and even that can be hazardous without studded shoes. Ignoring these facts will not only put you and your family at risk, but the safety of your neighbors as well.

High Knob typically spends more per mile than many state entities for snow removal, (\$1,200-\$1,500 per mile) with the exception of ski resorts. In a typical year, we spread over 660,000 pounds of material to treat ice. Most of your budget is expended on the upper elevations where temperatures stay below freezing for weeks at a time. The dirt roads do not drain when melting does occur and water pools and refreezes creating the need to continually spend money on the same road long after the storm is forgotten. Many snow contractors refuse to work High Knob because of the difficulty in satisfying the demands of mountainous elevations in winter. Because of these and other circumstances, a mountainside will always be a difficult place to access in the winter.

Outside experts and long time High Knob veterans offer the following advice to new residents:

- ❖ First of all, stay home if you can. The snowplow routinely comes across joy riders that want to “see if they can do it!” They usually end up blocking the road. The mountain is a beautiful place in the snow, unless you are driving.
- ❖ Change to studded snow tires and or chains in winter and remove them in spring to save the tread for next year. Street radial tires will not work on ice. (Notice the chain equipped vehicles climbing and descending with ease).
- ❖ Four-wheel drive is strongly recommended above Greenfield Road, although front wheel drive will work most of the time to the clubhouse level.
- ❖ Adding weight to the rear of a vehicle does not help. This only adds centrifugal force in a turn that can cause a car to spin out of control on ice.
- ❖ It is safer to walk than take a chance during a storm with improper equipment. You will usually get a ride from a neighbor with chains or the snow truck. Roads cannot be properly treated until after the precipitation has ended.
- ❖ When climbing a hill on ice, do not stop. You may not be able to restart unless you have chains or a lot of luck. This is where stuck, improperly equipped and abandoned cars in the middle of the road create trouble and accidents. You will have to back down to a level area and restart or pull off the road. Use the accelerator lightly. If the wheels begin to spin you are wasting your time. Do not use four-wheel low when climbing. It has too much power and will cause a spin.
- ❖ When descending an icy slope, first check ahead to be sure there are not stuck cars in your way lest you slide into them. Next use four-wheel low if you have it and regular low gear. Allow the vehicle to descend at its own pace and avoid the brake until you are on a level surface. The brake usually causes the car to break traction and lose control.
- ❖ Do not abandon a car in the middle of the road! It can cause an accident where people are seriously injured as well as impede snow removal. Towing services do work on High Knob in these situations (because they use chains). The snowplow operator cannot tow cars out of ditches during a storm. His first priority is to clear and treat roads to try and prevent further accidents.
- ❖ The service road has been very dangerous in icy temperatures. In 2001, there were fourteen wrecked vehicles on the service road. Eleven of the fourteen were equipped with four-wheel drive. After a storm has past, we have been able to apply chemicals to the steep part of the paved road. With the black surface it melts and drains making it a safer choice.