

Mayor's Newsletter



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Thank You Healthcare Workers

For almost 2 years, we have faced one of the most divisive experiences I've seen. COVID-19 has somehow become a political issue rather than a medical one. We've heard and had heated discussions from both sides. We've argued over masks and vaccines. The disease has divided families and changed friendships, possibly forever.

We all have our opinions about COVID-19, and I'm not going to make an argument either way. At this point, no one's mind is going to change. Instead, I'd like to focus on those who have been greatly affected by this global pandemic, the healthcare workers taking care of COVID-19 patients.

Pocatello's medical professionals are topnotch and deserve to be acknowledged for their efforts. I have had the opportunity to talk with a number of healthcare workers.

This has been the hardest 2 years of their careers. They have poured their hearts and souls into helping and protecting every patient, regardless of the patient's beliefs or whether those beliefs align with the healthcare worker's beliefs.

Every person working in the medical field has been pushed to their limit. The pandemic has challenged their mental, physical and emotional capacities like nothing else. No matter if they are employed at the hospital, an urgent care clinic, a doctor's office, assisted living center, etc., they have struggled.

Pocatello's healthcare workers deserve our thanks. I am incredibly grateful for what they have done on our behalf. They have risked their own health and that of their families. They've worked long hours. They've received praise and been abused, but through it all, they've been there when our loved ones

needed them the most.

I hope you will take an opportunity to thank our healthcare workers – from our doctors to CNAs, from administration to housekeeping staff. Their work is far from over with new variants of the coronavirus coming to our area. As they work through this latest surge in COVID-19 cases, be cognizant of their fatigue and stress. Be kind, and show your appreciation for their hard work and long hours. Write a note, help their families or just say "thank you."

I hope the pandemic ends soon, but until it does, please continue to show your appreciation to our healthcare workers. I know I can't say thank you enough for what they have done for our community. As always, I am proud to be your Mayor!

Smoke Alarms

What would your answer be if I asked, "When was the last time you tested your smoke alarms?" My guess is few people would be able to recall when, or if, they had ever done so. If your home's smoke alarms aren't tested regularly, you don't know if they are in proper working order, which could have fatal consequences.

Properly functioning smoke alarms save lives by detecting and alerting you to fire in its early stages, giving you the time needed to escape safely. According to the National Fire Protection Association, *working* smoke alarms reduce the risk of

dying in reported home fires nearly by half.

Taking the following simple steps can ensure your household's safety from fire.

- Test your smoke alarms at least once a month using the test button.
- Make sure everyone in your home knows the sound of your smoke alarms.
- Replace the battery right away if your smoke alarm "chirps," which is a warning the battery is low.
- Replace all smoke alarms when they are 10 years old or sooner if they don't respond

properly when tested. This includes alarms that use 10 year batteries and hard-wired alarms.

In addition to monthly testing, make sure you have the right number of smoke alarms for your home. They should be installed in every bedroom, outside each sleeping area and on every level of the home, including the basement.

If you have questions or would like more information about smoke alarm testing or installation, contact the Pocatello Fire Department at 208.234.6201.

Volunteers Needed

If you're looking to be involved in the community, the City of Pocatello has a variety of volunteer opportunities available. For example, we have 18 volunteer advisory boards open to individuals living inside the Pocatello city limits. Some require special skills, but most are open to any interested resident 16 years of age or older. One board, the Mayor's Youth Advisory Council, is open to any high school age student. You can see the list of boards, their meeting times/dates and any vacant positions at pocatello.us/254/Advisory-Committees. Application forms are also available at this site.

Snow Removal

Since winter is with us for a while longer, I thought I would remind everyone about our snow removal process.

Our Street Operations Department is on-call 24 hours a day when a snowstorm hits. Our crews work diligently to keep roadways open and safe. Pocatello has over 267 miles of roadway, with each roadway having 2 to 4 travel lanes. This equates to over 530 miles of roadway that Street Operations maintains with 12 pieces of equipment capable of plowing/removing snow.

The department is in direct communication with the local office of the National Weather Service in order to prepare for upcoming weather events. Several factors are considered when deciding how to treat each storm event. Staff looks at things like air and pavement temperatures, intensity and type of precipitation, wind conditions, geometrics, traffic volumes and emergency service needs.

In the days leading up to a storm, crews may apply salt brine to the streets as a preventative measure. Even with a little rain, the brine sticks to the streets and helps reduce or eliminate ice build-up on the roadway. Typically, brine is applied to main roads and emergency routes but may be applied to other streets as needed.

During a snow event, our plows run continuously, typically in 12-hour shifts. **Arterial roads** are the main thoroughfares through Pocatello and are essential to emergency service vehicles. Crews are instructed to plow arterial roads first. **Collector roads** are roadways that connect local or residential roads to arterial roads, and they are plowed next. **Residential roads** are plowed once arterial and collector roads are cleared. **School bus routes** are also considered a priority and are plowed as needed. A map of the main thoroughfares and collector roads is available at pocatello.us/DocumentCenter/View/653/Snow-Removal-PDF?bidId. Arterial and collector roads are prioritized, because it ensures that everyone in Pocatello is only 1 or 2 streets away from a cleared street.

When a snow event lasts for an extended period of time, plows usually need to re-plow arterial and collector roads before they are able to plow residential roads. Crews focus their efforts on clearing travel lanes and then move to clearing parking lanes if time and the storm allow. Trucks are also out during and after snow events to apply salt and/or sand, particularly at intersections, hills and curves.

Our crews make every effort to clear the roads to the best of their ability and in a timely manner. With each snow event being unique in length, impact

area, temperature and severity, the department must be flexible with procedures to ensure maximum safety and efficiency. The City is focused on keeping roadways open and travelable for emergency service vehicles and the motoring public, all while maintaining a cost-effective and manageable approach. I also want to remind everyone that we do not remove snow for very minor snowstorms, and we do not have a bare pavement snow removal policy.

There are things you can do to help our snow removal crews. Please do not shovel your snow into the street or create large piles of snow in the gutter/parking area. These piles of snow freeze and become extreme hazards for our crews and other motorists. When the weather warms, the piles also cause flooding issues, as many piles block storm drains. We also ask that you park off the street, if you are able, whenever there is a storm event. If our crews have an opportunity to plow curb-to-curb, maybe at 2 a.m., they would like to do so.

We appreciate your cooperation and understanding. If you have any questions about our snow removal process, please contact our Street Operations Department at 208.234.6250.

If there is a topic you'd like me to address in future newsletters or if you want to comment or ask a question, please use this sheet and send your comment to me. If you wish to call or e-mail, my number and address are listed on the front page. While I cannot respond to all comments individually, I do pass them on to the appropriate departments. V25,n2

My question/comment is _____

Name _____ Address _____
Email _____ Telephone _____