

Maintaining roads during the winter season is typically the responsibility of the agency that built those roads initially or in whose jurisdiction the roads lie. While that responsibility may be contracted out to other organizations (e.g. private contracting companies) the standards that must be met, and the general methods and approaches to meet those standards are typically defined by the government agency that owns the roads being maintained. Especially for smaller communities, the creation and maintenance of such documentation is often an onerous task that because of the burden it imposes on an organization may not receive as much attention as it warrants. Typically, for example, such documentation can be extremely important in liability and tort issues, and a lack of adequate attention to detail in the preparation of the documentation may leave an organization overly vulnerable to liability.

This paper reports on a web based system recently developed and deployed in North America that allows agencies to develop a complete documentation system that provides guidance to employees (or contractors) in the fulfillment of winter maintenance activities, informs the public as to what actions will and will not be taken by the agency in winter conditions, and allows for documentation of activities taken in such a way as to provide optimal risk management for the agency. The use of the web based system is described in the context of two communities of differing sizes (one large, one small) that have used the system to develop and maintain their policy documentation. The benefits and drawbacks of the system are presented and discussed within this context.