

How Do I Get a Permit to Snowplow?

1. Make An Appointment: Contact the Ranger District office which has jurisdiction over the area in which you live and make an appointment to see the designated lands staff. At this meeting, you will receive an information packet on how to submit an application for authorization. As well, we will determine if City or County Special District offices need to be contacted.

2. Submit An Application: The completed form must include signature, date, legal description of the land, proof of clear title, and the estimated acreage of Federal land involved. A topographic quadrangle or other detailed map (scale: 2" = 1 mile) should accompany a sketch of the proposed use, showing your property and other private and public lands.

How Long Does It Take?

Requests for snowplowing authorization are prioritized according to the extent the public is benefited. Therefore, applications by a municipal water development, radio tower, etc. are handled before those filed by individual landowners requesting private access. Requests made by neighborhood associations representing several property owners have priority over individual requests.

An environmental analysis, at applicant's cost, must be conducted before any permit is authorized. The analysis typically takes 6-7 months, but can take up to a year or more to be completed.

The Forest Service must study the potential impacts of snowplowing or gate installation on animal life, soil stability, threatened or endangered species, archaeological sites and current uses of the Forest. Other agencies with jurisdiction must also be consulted and at least one month allowed for public comment.

Questions? Contact Us

U.S. Forest Service Coconino National Forest



Forest Supervisor's Office
1824 S. Thompson Street
Flagstaff, AZ 86001-2529
(928) 527-3600

Peaks/Mormon Lake Ranger District
5075 N. Highway 89
Flagstaff, AZ 86004
(928) 526-0866

Red Rock Ranger District
P.O. Box 20429
Sedona, AZ 86341-0429
(928) 282-4119

Mogollon Rim Ranger District
Blue Ridge Office
HC 31, Box 300
Happy Jack, AZ 86024
(928) 477-2255

Coconino National Forest Website
www.fs.fed.us/r3/coconino

If you are interested in forming a Road Improvement District, please contact:

Coconino County Office of the County Manager



Special District Office
219 E. Cherry Avenue
Flagstaff, AZ 86001-4634
(928) 679-7176

Coconino County Special Dist. Website
www.coconino.az.gov/roadimpdist.aspx



United States Department of Agriculture

Forest Service

Southwestern Region

Snowplowing Forest Roads to Reach Private Property

Coconino National Forest



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Be Aware!

The Forest Service does NOT plow any of its roads for snow removal, and unconditional access to private property across federal land is NOT guaranteed, nor is road improvement.

If you use a Forest Road to get to your property, you must obtain authorization and a permit from the Forest Service before you can legally plow it for snow removal or perform any road maintenance. The mere existence of a road on the National Forest does not give anyone the legal right to use it for private use. Furthermore, the Forest Service reserves the right to deny vehicle access on any Forest Road.

What Costs May Be Involved?

Absorption Costs

Property owners requesting a permit are liable for any maintenance and damage to closed roads as a result of such use. Permit holders may be required to absorb the costs of bringing the existing road up to an acceptable standard suitable for year-round, all-weather use.

Posted Bond

The Forest Service requires that a bond be posted to cover any damage that may occur. The bond amount is determined by estimating likely repair and maintenance needs.

Gate Costs

Permit holders may be required to install and maintain a roadway gate, at their own expense. A gated access point may also require the permit holder to plow adequate turn around and parking facilities for public use.

Environmental Analysis Costs

The cost of preparing the permit, including the Environmental Analysis, must be paid by the applicant.

Annual Fee

An annual fee may be required to cover administrative costs.



Individuals vs. Multiple Owners

Individual permits will not be issued to property owners when multiple owners are in need of using a specific Forest Road. Property owners must form a homeowners association or road improvement district and apply for a use permit in the name of the association or district.

The formation of a road improvement district requires that at least 50% of the affected property owners petition the County Board of Supervisors to establish a road district in addition to securing easements from the U.S. Forest Service and/or private land owners along the road to be maintained or improved.

Property owners are encouraged to talk with their neighbors to determine the level of support for a homeowners association or proposed road district.

Important questions to ask are:

- Is the neighborhood willing to take on costs that may be involved, including bond requirements?
- Is the neighborhood ready to assume responsibilities for plowing and preparing for public use during the wintertime?

Basic Responsibilities When Snowplowing

The Forest Service will draw up a maintenance plan to outline plowing specifications, which will insure that your snowplowing won't damage the road. Permit holders are solely responsible for any damage they may cause to roads.

Individuals who obtain a permit to snowplow have basic responsibilities to insure the health of that particular Forest Road.

Permit Holders Shall:

1. Remove snow from the entire width of the road surface, including turnouts.
2. Remove snow slides, earth slides, fallen timber, and boulders that obstruct the road.
3. Remove snow, ice, and debris from ditches and culverts so the drainage system will function efficiently at all times.
4. Deposit all debris (except snow and ice) removed from the road and ditches at approved locations.
5. Leave at least 2" of surface snow to protect the road.
6. Restore any damage resulting from snow removal.
7. Insure your snowplowing is conducted in accordance with the Traffic Control Plan.

Permit Holders Shall NOT:

8. Undercut constructed slopes or remove gravel or other surfacing material from the road surface.
9. Leave snow berms on the road surface. Berms on the road shoulder shall be removed or drainage holes shall be opened and maintained.
10. Use equipment with cleats or other tracks to plow snow without prior written approval from the responsible official.