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Up Front

- 5 A Message from the British Columbia Public Works Association
- 7 A Message from the Canadian Public Works Association, Alberta Chapter
- 9 A Message from the Saskatchewan Public Works Association
- 10 A Message from the Canadian Public Works Association, Manitoba Chapter
- 11 A Message from the Alberta Municipal Supervisors' Association

In Every Issue

- 12 Safety Report: *Protecting Public Works Crews on the Move and at the Roadside This Winter*
- 14 Safety Report: *Strategies to Boost Your Mental Health*
- 16 Safety Report: *Resolutions for 2026: Building Safer Public Works Teams*
- 18 Upcoming Events
- 20 Legal Brief: *The Builders Lien Act: The Highway Exemption*
- 22 Community Highlight: *Public Works Inspires Our Future*
- 24 Community Highlight: *Public Works and Asset Management: Do You Know What You Own?*
- 26 Community Highlight: *Altona's Purr-fect Response to Stray and Feral Cats*
- 28 Community Highlight: *Developing Municipal Winter Maintenance Policy*

Tech Talk

- 30 Safety Beneath Our Streets: How BC 1 Call Supports Public Works
- 32 Stainless Steel Pools: European Innovation Redefines Sustainable Aquatic Design

34 Index to Advertisers

On the cover: The visibility of Public Works in the community – whether on the street or at National Public Works Week events – can go a long way in inspiring the next generation of public workers. Photo courtesy of Nike Juzkiw and Elliott Brown.



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A heartfelt thank you to all the volunteers, speakers, exhibitors, and delegates who made the joint conference such a resounding success. Your commitment to excellence in public works and municipal safety continues to inspire us all.

conversation. From technical innovations to impactful keynotes, the conference showcased the strength of collaboration across disciplines and municipalities – large and small. The most fun portion of our conference was the opportunity to recognize a number of individuals and communities with PWABC Awards.

A heartfelt thank you to all the volunteers, speakers, exhibitors, and delegates who made the joint conference such a resounding success. Your commitment to excellence in public works and municipal safety continues to inspire us all.

Turning to national developments, the 2025 federal budget has brought renewed momentum to our sector. With \$51 billion committed over the next decade, the launch of the Build Communities Strong Fund is a clear signal that infrastructure is being recognized not just as a cost – but as a catalyst. This significant investment in roads, water systems, and public facilities is a win for every community, from the largest urban centres to the smallest rural districts.

For municipalities across British Columbia, the implications may be significant. The budget’s focus on streamlined funding access and regional equity means that long-standing infrastructure priorities may move from planning to implementation faster. Smaller communities, in particular, stand to benefit from reduced administrative barriers and increased flexibility in how funds are deployed.

But funding is only part of the equation. The real work lies in how we collaborate – across jurisdictions, sectors, and disciplines – to ensure that every dollar invested delivers long-term value for our communities. As public works professionals, we are uniquely positioned to lead this charge with innovation, integrity, and a deep understanding of the communities we serve.

Let’s keep building – stronger systems, stronger partnerships, and stronger communities.

Taryn Scollard
President
Public Works Association of British Columbia

Last fall, the Public Works Association of British Columbia (PWABC) and the BC Municipal Safety Association (BCMSA) came together to host one of our most successful joint conferences to date in Whistler, British Columbia.

The energy was palpable as more than 100 first-time attendees joined our community to bring fresh perspectives, new ideas, and a contagious enthusiasm that elevated every session, workshop, and hallway

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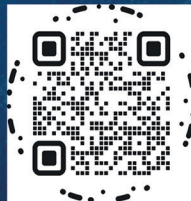


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A Message from the Canadian Public Works Association, Alberta Chapter

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You can learn more about
the American Public Works
Association, Alberta Chapter on
their website: alberta.apwa.org.

Did you know that the Alberta Chapter was first founded in 1979 to enhance the services of the APWA to the Alberta public works community and to improve the quality of public works products and services to Canadian citizens.

As we enter this transitional season, it is my pleasure to connect with all of you. The dedication and hard work of our members have been truly inspiring, and I am grateful for the commitment that each of you brings to public works across Alberta.

It is hard to believe how quickly the months have passed and, as we reflect on the past year, I am proud of how our chapter has grown and adapted to new challenges. Our members continuously demonstrate resilience and ingenuity and find new ways to support their communities, while advancing the field of public works. Through continued engagement, professional development, and collaboration, we have strengthened our network and built lasting connections.

The weather (as always) has been full of surprises – hot and dry one moment, cool and wet the next, and with snow on the first day of summer! As I am writing this message, I want to acknowledge the challenges many of us recently faced with high stream flow advisories across Alberta. It's a stark reminder of the importance of preparedness and vigilance.

By now, I'm sure you have all prepared for winter weather and have gotten your equipment switched over; tasks like mixing salt and sand and snowplow training are vital activities. This reminds me of the essential work we do to serve our communities. One of our greatest tools for success is learning from one another, which is something that I truly appreciate about networking at in-person gatherings – the shared ideas and experiences are invaluable.

On the topic of networking, I am thrilled to share that the American Public Works Association (APWA), Alberta Chapter will be hosting the Equipment Roadeo once again for the first time in a few years. We have a new venue and a new date and time. So, save the date for September 3-4, 2026, at The Olds College Training Facility. A huge thank you goes out to the new Equipment Roadeo committee for securing this venue.

We are also still interested in expanding our Idea Groups. So, if you or your municipality would like to host a future Idea Group meeting, please let us know. In addition, we are seeking committee members for the Idea Group – your involvement could make a big impact.

Do you have something you'd like to share with the broader public works community? Perhaps a training idea, a job posting, or other resources? We'd love to help get the word out by featuring it on our website, www.alberta.apwa.org. Collaboration and resource-sharing strengthen us all.

Looking ahead, the APWA Alberta Chapter will be participating in the Alberta Equipment Expo, which is scheduled to take place in Edmonton in 2027. We look forward to another successful expo.

Thank you for all that you do. Stay safe, and don't forget to check our website for updates and resources.

Peter McDowell

President

American Public Works Association,
Alberta Chapter

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A Message from the Saskatchewan Public Works Association

Over the last year, Saskatchewan Public Works Association (SPWA) Board members have been hard at work preparing for the upcoming conference and other key events. Here's a quick recap of the past four months and a glimpse of what's to come.

SPWA continues to host its Lunch & Learn webinars, offered at no cost to participants, which span a wide range of disciplines and are designed to be both informative and interactive. Here, attendees have the opportunity to engage directly with guest speakers, ask questions, and build professional connections. For details on upcoming Lunch & Learn webinars, as well as other SPWA events, visit our website, www.saskatchewan.apwa.org.

Partnering with the City of North Battleford, SPWA delivered two, one-day 0.6 CEU courses titled 'Permit to Operate a Water and Wastewater System.' The courses were held on two consecutive days – November 26-27, 2025 – to accommodate community operations by enabling crews to attend in shifts. Participants gained valuable insight into the development of operating permits and their alignment with Canadian environmental legislation, standards, and guidelines.

From February 18-21, 2026, I will have the privilege of representing the Saskatchewan Chapter at the Region IX Chapter Meeting in Victoria, British Columbia. Following this event, I will be providing the Board and SPWA members a report that highlights key discussions and outcomes.

The Annual SPWA Conference & PWville will be held at the Saskatoon Inn February 24-26, 2026, and will include two days of workshops, a tradeshow, and a keynote, as well as a 0.6 CEU course on the final day. In addition to professional development opportunities at the event, SPWA will be celebrating members and their communities through its awards program.

A highlight of the show (with assistance from FerMarc) is the \$2,000 SPWA scholarship that supports a member's son or daughter

who is entering their first year of postsecondary education. To review the award categories or to nominate someone for an award, please contact the SPWA office.

In April 2026, SPWA will be joining with our British Columbia counterparts to host a Fleet Maintenance webinar. This will be a two-and-a-half-day webinar certificate course, and dates will be announced on Constant Contact. Stay tuned for more information to come.

From May 17-23, 2026, communities across the country will again celebrate National Public Works Week (NPWW), a time to acknowledge the vital contributions of public works employees in maintaining and enhancing our communities. SPWA encourages members to share their plans for recognizing staff during this week of appreciation and we welcome photos and short descriptions of your community's celebrations, which will then be featured by SPWA to showcase the outstanding work of public works professionals.

As a chapter, we are eager to learn about the initiatives taking place in your community and, whether it involves the construction of new infrastructure or the development of innovative approaches to completing work, we welcome your stories. We want to remind our members that it is not the size or complexity of a project that matters, but the positive impact it has on the community. Selected projects have the opportunity to be showcased here in *The Roadrunner* to highlight the valuable contributions of our members.

Going forward, SPWA will continue to bring our members – and others in the public works profession – greater value in educational and networking opportunities. We will also continue to promote professionalism in the public works field, advocate the essential role that public works plays in the quality of life, and promote it as a career choice for the workforce of the future.

Stewart Schafer

President

Saskatchewan Public Works Association

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The Saskatchewan Chapter strives to promote professionalism in the public works field and provide a network through which members can share and receive useful information.



A Message from the Canadian Public Works Association, Manitoba Chapter

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manitoba.apwa.org

Did you know that Manitoba is the longest serving of the Canadian Chapters and has been providing a forum for practitioners since 1955? We actively support our membership, the public, and policy makers to collaborate and maintain healthy communities throughout the province.

Greetings from the Friendly Manitoba Chapter! As I write this, road and earthworks project managers in Manitoba are currently scurrying about to prepare their projects for winter slumber, and the underground crews are gearing up for the province’s winter piping and riverbank stabilization.

Here in Winnipeg, the North End Wastewater Pollution Control Center (NEWPCC) in North Winnipeg is now in full swing with its multi-billion upgrade, but there are other projects underway. The Red River Siphon project, which includes replacing a failed forcemain under the Red River, has begun, along with other combined sewer relief projects. There are also many projects under way – or about to receive approval – across the province, including the Lake St. Martin Diversion, a new gold mine in Lynn Lake, and lots of buzz about the Port of Churchill from both the provincial and federal governments.

At the same time, we have some Board of Directors members who have had to take a step back to focus on personal or work priorities. We thank them for their support of the chapter and are currently seeking out new members to join the Board, where they can provide their own unique speciality and perspective.

But this hasn’t stopped us from preparing for National Public Works Week (NPWW) 2026 with our first CPWA Roadeo in four years. For this event, we are drawing guidance from Board Member Neil MacLaine, who guided the City of Thompson’s Public Works Department to their own National Award in 2024. We have also begun to plan for a full Public

Works Conference in fall 2026, showing that – like our to do lists – the excitement never stops for the Manitoba Chapter.

Public works officials are easy to spot when they’re out in the wild, but we also have our regular lives when maybe we’re not quite so visible. This is often when we get the chance to hear the public’s unfiltered opinions of what we do.

I want to talk about a recent event that we had, which was bowling for our Chapter’s Bowl-oween night in Winnipeg. As the attendees were handing in their shoes after the event, I was speaking with a member and former Board Member, Ralph Sjodin, who works in the City of Winnipeg’s Streets Maintenance division and is responsible for the railroad grade crossings (RRX). We were talking about the crossings close to the bowling alley and the employee behind the counter overheard and interrupted us just to thank Ralph for his good work.

Because he rode a scooter to work and had to navigate the crossing delicately in the past, the employee was extremely happy with the recent RRX crossing upgrades and let Ralph know that his crew’s hard work was more than appreciated. I’m sure the many other thousands of drivers, cyclists, and pedestrians who use the crossing every day do as well.

So, for those public works professionals out there who wonder if anyone ever notices the work they do – I can tell you that they do. They just don’t have the opportunity to thank you in person. Maybe you just have to go bowling more often to hear it.

Darren Wanless
President
Canadian Public Works Association,
Manitoba Chapter



A Message from the Alberta Municipal Supervisors Association

I encourage each of you to take pride in your work and stay connected with your peers. Sharing best practices and supporting one another is at the heart of what makes our association strong.

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Visit www.amsapw.ca to learn more about AMSA's more than 40-year history of advocacy, sharing best practices, and training.

Greetings from the Alberta Municipal Supervisors Association (AMSA).

As winter settles in across our region, I wanted to take a moment to recognize the outstanding work being done by public works professionals across Alberta. Whether it's plowing snow-covered roads at 3 A.M., ensuring our water systems remain operational in freezing temperatures, or preparing for an emergency storm response, the dedication of our teams continues to uphold the safety, mobility, and quality of life that residents depend on.

This season brings its challenges but also opportunities for us to innovate, to train, and to strengthen the partnerships that make our work effective. Many of our municipalities are embracing smarter and more sustainable approaches to winter maintenance, such as brining systems, salt reduction strategies, and enhanced communication with the public. These efforts not only serve our communities better but also protect the environment and manage limited resources responsibly.

I encourage each of you to take pride in your work and stay connected with your peers. Sharing best practices and supporting

one another is at the heart of what makes our association strong.

AMSA's mission continues to unite members towards individual development, improved service to their municipality and the public, and to improve the members' knowledge related to their role in public works. We provide a forum for exchange – both online and in person at conventions – and the development of innovative ideas, as well as offer various professional development opportunities. I invite you to check us out and consider attending our spring convention in March 2026.

On behalf of AMSA and our more than 150 members, I want to thank our dedicated group of executives and directors and the association's many sponsors. Sponsor contributions help sustain our organization and allow us to continue offering two annual conventions at no cost to members.

I encourage you to visit www.amsapw.ca and learn more about AMSA's more than four-decade history of advocacy, sharing best practices, and training.

Hope to see you at our next convention!

Travis Wierenga
AMSA President



Protecting Public Works Crews on the Road and Roadside This Winter

By Road Safety at Work

Whether they're plowing, salting, inspecting, or repairing infrastructure, winter is one of the most dangerous times of the year for public works crews.

Crews are often out working on the roads in the worst of conditions and are exposed to drivers who are more likely to lose control. The result is a greater chance of workers being involved in a collision or being struck by a vehicle during roadside work.

Employer responsibilities

Safety responsibilities don't change with the seasons, but your safety program needs to address the additional hazards created by snow, ice, fog, heavy rain, and cold, as well as diminished daylight hours.

The employer is responsible for the safety of your workers when:

- They drive or ride in any vehicle used for work. That includes driving a snowplow, picking up materials, riding with co-workers between job sites, or even using a personal vehicle to attend an offsite business meeting.
- They work at the roadside.
- You provide or arrange transportation for three or more workers. WorkSafeBC regulations apply whether you provide buses, vans, or non-commercial vehicles such as cars, pickups, or SUVs. Before each shift, reasonable measures must be

taken to evaluate road, weather, and traffic conditions to ensure safe transit of workers. A qualified person must inspect the vehicle before first use on a shift. Any defects that could affect worker safety must be fixed before the vehicle is used.

Overlooked hazards that raise risks

Many elements of winter driving safety are obvious, but others can be overlooked, such as:

- **Vehicle condition:** Properly functioning heaters and effective windshield wipers can affect driver safety. Winter-rated tires are mandatory on many highways in British Columbia during winter months, and vehicles must be maintained and in good condition.
- **Load security:** Tools and materials must be properly secured to prevent them from becoming projectiles if a driver loses control of their vehicle.
- **Emergency readiness:** Employers must develop, implement, and educate workers on the procedures for breakdowns, delays, or crashes. Procedures are required when workers work alone and / or in remote locations.
- **Worker visibility:** In addition to high visibility PPE, light boards, flashing warning signs etc., may be required to provide better visibility and warning that workers are present.
- **Fatigue:** Long shifts in cold and darkness impair judgment and reaction time, raising crash risks.

A driving-related checklist for employers

As part of winterizing your road safety planning, consider these steps:

- Provide a winter safety orientation. Cover vehicle features, winter driving skills, and your driving policies and procedures.
- Talk with employees. What hazards are they most concerned about? Remind them about your winter driving policies and procedures. Verify that they know to install tire chains and conduct a pre-trip inspection, as well as ensure they know how to best drive in winter conditions.
- Review pre-trip vehicle inspection and maintenance records, especially for personal vehicles used on the job. Make sure winter tires have at least 3.5-millimetre tread depth and are in good condition. Are emergency kits stocked?
- Use journey management and trip planning. Check www.drivebc.ca (or similar options in your province) and have workers do it too before leaving. Cancel or delay trips if conditions are unsafe.
- Schedule regular rest breaks into worker shifts. Ensure workers are alert and not fatigued before they drive. If a worker is tired, the risk of a crash triples.

A driving-related checklist for employees

Workers have safety responsibilities too. Educate and train them in safe driving practices, supervise them to verify their knowledge, and have them look out for one another.

Here are some basic things for workers to do:

- Conduct a pre-trip vehicle inspection that covers, at minimum, tires, lights, indicators, hazard lights, wipers, and the heater / defroster.
- Clear snow and ice from all windows, mirrors, lights, and the roof.
- Slow down on the road, leave at least four seconds of following distance, and avoid sudden braking or turns.
- Always turn headlights on so taillights are activated too and do not rely solely on daytime running lights.
- Keep warm, bulky clothing and boots in the vehicle but avoid wearing items that restrict movement while driving.
- Keep a shovel in the vehicle.
- Carry a fully charged cell phone and charger.
- Get adequate rest before shifts to help reduce fatigue. Recognize warning signs like drifting from the lane or missing road signs. Take breaks if drowsy rather than pushing through.

A checklist for roadside work zones

Working on the shoulder of a road is dangerous. In winter, the risks multiply.

Remind roadside crews that they should expect:

- **Reduced visibility:** Shorter daylight hours can reduce their visibility whether they are driving or working at the roadside. Snow spray from passing vehicles can blind drivers temporarily and obscure workers.
- **Narrowed roadways:** Snowbanks can limit the work area, which can move crews closer to traffic.
- **Longer stopping distances:** Ice and slush reduce the ability of drivers to stop. Best practices for roadside work zones in winter include:
 - Adjusting your site plan layout to factor in snowbanks, reduced sightlines, and icy surfaces.
 - Boosting visibility with bright signage, extended taper lengths, and extra cones leading up to the work zone. Equip workers with reflective PPE and flashing wearable lights. Illuminate entrances and exits when daylight is limited.
- Using AFADs (automated flagger assistance devices) to keep workers out of traffic lanes.

- Protecting the work area by positioning vehicles or concrete or water-filled barriers where roads are icy or slippery.
- Setting reduced speeds for drivers approaching the work zone.
- Have an emergency plan for anticipated events such as vehicles entering the work zone or changing weather conditions.

Ultimately, winter brings heightened risks for public works crews, especially those driving or working on the roadside in harsh conditions. Employers must proactively address seasonal hazards through robust safety programs, vehicle inspections, and journey planning. Workers also play a vital role by following safe driving practices and staying alert. By prioritizing visibility, preparedness, and communication, employers and crews can help ensure that winter work is not only productive – but safe. ▸

Road Safety at Work helps improve the safety of people who drive for work or work at the roadside. It provides free online tools and resources at www.roadsafetyatwork.ca.

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Strategies to Boost Your Mental Health

By the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety (CCOHS)

On average, workers in Canada spend 60 per cent of their waking hours on the job. With so much time spent at work, it's important to have a workplace that not only supports physical health but also mental well-being.

Employers are responsible for identifying and taking measures to protect their workers from psychological hazards in the workplace, like stress from heavy workloads, poor work-life balance, and physical, verbal, and emotional abuse. Workers can also take steps to manage work-related stress and improve their emotional health. The following strategies can help promote positive mental health for everyone.

Build positive relationships

A workplace culture where workers feel connected and supported by their

colleagues and leaders is essential to good mental health. Employers should implement policies that encourage civility and respect in the workplace. Management and workers can do their part by putting these ideals into practice through positive social interactions.

Respectful behaviour can go a long way in establishing good interpersonal relationships at work. Be courteous with your co-workers and say “hello,” “please,” “thank you,” “excuse me,” and “I’m sorry.” Include others by offering an invite to lunch or asking for input on a group project.

Value other people’s time and efforts – be on time to meetings, give your full attention, avoid interrupting others, and be respectful of deadlines. Also be sure to elevate other people in your organization by giving credit when it’s due and celebrating the achievements of others. Forming

positive social relationships can help reduce stress while fostering a mentally healthy workplace for everyone to thrive.

While there are steps your employer can take to help manage the harm from mental health issues, there are steps that can be taken for your self-care as well.

Give yourself a break

Taking breaks from work can help you recharge your mental battery and work at your optimal potential. Regular breaks can also make you feel more focused, creative, and engaged in your work, giving you renewed energy. Working through breaks and not disconnecting from work can lead to poor work-life balance and burnout.

Your employer should help you with workload issues so you can take the breaks to which you are entitled and unplug from the workday when it’s done.

Participate in mental health first aid training

It can be difficult to know how to approach or talk to someone at work who is experiencing a mental health challenge or crisis. That's where mental health first aid training can help and, just like providing first aid after a physical injury, offering initial support to a person in mental distress can be a vital first step to getting them the help they need.

Education in mental health first aid encourages co-workers to support one another. It can help reduce the stigma associated with mental illness and build resilient teams while also creating a culture where workers feel comfortable asking for help without fear of judgment.

By participating in mental health first aid training, you gain the knowledge needed to recognize signs and symptoms of a mental health problem, including depression, anxiety, and burnout.

You also build the practical skills needed for early intervention, such as how to start a conversation that will help keep co-workers feeling safe and engaged until appropriate professional help becomes available.

Practice self-care

Work can be busy, so take the time to check in with yourself, reflect on your emotions and practice self-care.

Over your lunch, treat yourself to simple pleasures, like listening to a podcast, reading a book, or engaging in another activity you enjoy. Take time to participate in workplace programs that encourage wellness, such as fitness breaks and mindfulness workshops. For workers on the road, find time in your day to take a walk or stretch to reduce stress.

If you work in an office setting, make your workstation your own personal space by including photos of loved ones, plants, snacks, or other items that make it more comfortable. Adopt healthy routines, like maintaining a good diet, getting enough sleep, and setting clear work-life boundaries, such as finishing work on time.

Perhaps most important, always be kind to yourself. If something doesn't go as planned at work, recognize that everyone faces challenges, and learn from the experience instead of passing self-judgement.

Self-care isn't self-indulgence. It's about prioritizing your time to proactively do

If something doesn't go as planned at work, recognize that everyone faces challenges, and learn from the experience instead of passing self-judgement.

things that improve your mental health and overall well-being.

Seek support if needed

If you're concerned about your mental health and how it's affecting your ability to do your job, it may be time to seek support.

Your supervisor or manager may be able to help you by letting you know about your workplace's mental health policies and any resources that might be available to you, such as an employee assistance program (EAP). In many cases, these programs offer confidential services to help with family relationships, conflicts at work, workplace discrimination, and grief or loss of a loved one, among other stressors.

Remember that diagnosis or details of treatment do not need to be disclosed to your employer. Share as much about your mental health as you're comfortable with and identify what kind of support you may need, whether it be time off, flexible hours, changes to your workload, or access to other accommodations.

Be open to suggestions and collaborate on a plan that works for you and your employer. Work together to summarize any decisions for

accommodations in writing for clarity. Your employer should follow up with you regularly to review how the adjustments are going and to see if further accommodations are needed.

Looking forward

A healthy workplace can help people feel supported, valued, and connected. When employers and workers work together to build positive relationships, take meaningful breaks, invest in mental health training, practice self-care, and reach out for support when needed, everyone benefits.

These small, intentional actions can transform the workplace into a community that nurtures both productivity and well-being. After all, when mental health thrives, people and organizations do, too. ▶

The Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety (CCOHS) promotes the total well-being – physical, psychosocial, and mental health – of workers in Canada by providing information, advice, education, and management systems and solutions that support the prevention of injury and illness. Visit www.ccohs.ca for more safety tips.

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Resolutions for 2026: Building Safer Public Works Teams

By Alexandra Skinner, WorkSafeBC

In public works, no two days are the same. One morning might start before dawn with crews salting icy roads, while the next involves repairing a water main beside traffic. These unpredictable conditions demand more than technical skill – they require a shared commitment to safety that every worker understands and practices every day.

As the new year begins, it's a good time to renew your focus on workplace health and safety. Taking stock of your current systems, identifying gaps, and planning improvements helps ensure that safety remains part of every task and decision – not just at the start of the year, but all year long.

Resolution 1: Demonstrate a leadership commitment to safety

The *Workers Compensation Act* and Occupational Health and Safety Regulation provide the framework for safe workplaces in British Columbia. When leaders demonstrate attention to regulatory details, such as confined-space entry procedures or safe excavation practices, crews follow suit.

Many employers have programs to cover essential elements like inspections,

investigations, and training, so their organization meets the minimum standards required by WorkSafeBC. However, true leadership goes beyond simply meeting regulatory requirements. It means actively managing risks and creating conditions where injuries are prevented.

A coordinated health and safety management system links hazard identification, assessment of risk, implementation of controls, procurement, and meaningful worker participation into a single framework – embedding safety into every part of planning, operations, and decision-making.

A safety management system ensures that safety isn't an afterthought but a consistent part of every project, from concept to completion.

For example, before starting a road maintenance project, a team might look for possible hazards and use the hierarchy of controls to reduce risks, make sure the right equipment is ready for use, train workers on safety, review the plan with supervisors and crew, and adjust the work plan based on feedback from the team. By integrating safety into every step – from planning to execution and post-project review – everyone participates in keeping the worksite safe.

A safety management system also relies on open communication. Workers should be

actively involved at every stage, from spotting hazards to helping create and update the safety plan. Encouraging a no-blame culture, where workers can report hazards or near misses without fear of punishment, is one way to make this engagement meaningful. This kind of transparency not only helps prevent incidents but also supports continuous improvement.

Resolution 2: Strengthen supervision and training

Supervision and training are a cornerstone of every safe worksite. While employers have the primary responsibility for health and safety, crews rely on supervisors who are visible, knowledgeable, and proactive about safety.

Supervisors have legal responsibilities under the Act and Regulation, so it's important to provide oversight and support for supervisors themselves. This ensures that they have the training, resources, and guidance needed to meet their obligations effectively.

In 2026, focus on equipping supervisors with more than technical expertise. Make sure they understand their legal responsibilities. Build their communication, leadership, and safety-coaching skills so they can guide crews effectively, address unsafe practices constructively, and foster open dialogue about hazards. For example, a supervisor might check in with

crew members each day to discuss how new or changing conditions could affect the work, helping to catch hazards early.

Train and retrain your crew on a regular basis. Initial safety orientations must cover safe work procedures, emergency response, and rights and responsibilities under the Act. But training shouldn't stop there – commit to ongoing learning opportunities and refresher sessions that reinforce safe practices.

Job materials should also be kept up to date with current risks, regulations, and technologies, and be user-friendly to keep crews engaged. Incorporating interactive exercises or scenario-based discussions helps workers apply what they've learned.

Resolution 3: Assess risks early, often, and together

Risk assessments are key to preventing incidents and injuries. They involve identifying hazards, determining who might be harmed, and deciding what controls are needed to reduce risk. Conduct these assessments with your workers and include psychological and ergonomic risks as part of the process. A thorough assessment also includes evaluating and rehearsing emergency response plans.

Follow this approach:

- Identify and assess risks specific to your workplace.
- Implement controls to manage these risks. Controls must be appropriate, effective, and compliant.
- Effectively communicate these controls to workers and others in the workplace.
- Monitor on an ongoing basis to ensure these controls remain adequate and effective.
- Ensure meaningful worker participation as required by the size of your workplace.

When managing hazards, follow the hierarchy of controls: eliminate the hazard where possible, substitute safer materials or equipment, apply engineering controls, use administrative measures (like rotating crews or adjusting schedules), and rely on personal protective equipment as the last line of defence.

For example, a crew planning a drainage repair near a busy intersection might adjust traffic control measures when parked vehicles reduce sightlines. Involving workers in these decisions ensures controls are practical and more likely to be followed.

Risk management is a continuous, collaborative process. Commit to reassessing high-risk areas and activities, and updating controls whenever conditions, processes, or equipment change.

Turning resolutions into lasting habits

Safe workplaces share a few key traits: steady effort, visible leadership, and everyday decisions that prioritize safety. When leaders model safe behaviour,

supervisors stay engaged, and when workers are part of the process, safety becomes a natural part of the workplace culture. Make 2026 the year these resolutions guide every shift, every project, and every decision – turning good intentions into habits that last all year. ▶

Alexandra Skinner is the Manager of Government and Media Relations at WorkSafeBC.

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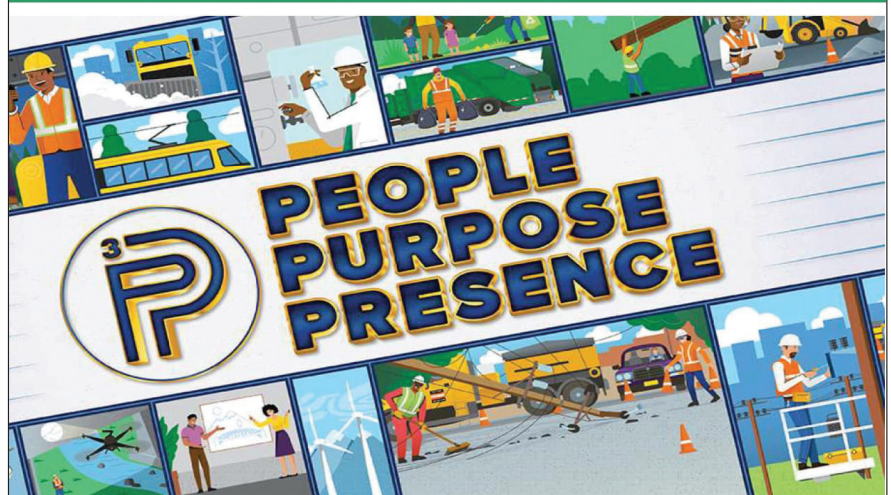


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Photo courtesy of the City of North Battleford.

Meet a Machine in North Battleford

On November 1, 2025, the City of North Battleford, Saskatchewan, held a 'Hot Dog and Machine Event, where the city brought out some of their equipment to display to the public. The weather was warm for a November event and approximately 350 people showed up to check out the event and have a free hot dog on the city.

The event was also hosted prior to 2026 budget deliberations to show people the equipment the city uses daily in their operations. On each piece of equipment at the event, city administration provided information about what the equipment is used for, when the equipment was purchased and the cost the city paid, and what would it cost if the equipment was purchased today.

It was appreciated that lifetime Saskatchewan Public Works Association (SPWA) member, Dan Maloney, showed up to the event. Special thanks to Jeff Blanchard and Kevin Kristian for cooking the hot dogs as well as public works staff for setting up the displays.

Because of its success, City of North Battleford is hoping to hold the event again in 2026, but earlier in the year.



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We are looking for HR Reports, Safety Reports, Investment Reports, Legal Briefs, Community Reports, and Tech Talks for our 2026 editions! *All articles are subject to approval.*



The Builders Lien Act:

The Highway Exemption

By Sonia Sahota & Aidan Andrews, Civic Legal LLP

Tidily tucked right near the top of British Columbia’s *Builders Lien Act*,¹ a keen-eyed reader will spot a small section entitled “Exemptions”.² Of present interest is paragraph (a) of that section, which provides, in part, that:

Nothing in this Act extends to any of the following:

(a) *a highway, as defined by the Transportation Act, or to any improvement done or caused to be done on it by a municipality, the minister responsible for the administration of the Transportation Act [...] or any other public body designated by regulation[.]*

The primary question that arises from section 1.1(a) is to precisely what property and improvements it applies. Does it only apply to “road” uses and improvements (e.g., road surfaces, medians, sidewalks),

or is the exemption broader? The answer is important, because the broader the exemption, the more limited the recourse available to an unpaid contractor or subcontractor.

Builders liens provide a useful tool for contractors and subcontractors to protect their rights to payment. By filing a lien claim, which is registered on title to the ‘improved’ land, contractors and subcontractors can secure the value of their work and materials. Since the value is in the land itself, which a court can order sold in an action to enforce a lien, contractors and subcontractors can obtain greater protection than they would otherwise have against an owner, who may not have any money or other assets to pay a debt. A lien incentivizes payment since the owner must discharge the lien to transfer the property (except by court order). A lien will also cause most lenders to stop advancing

funds, bringing construction projects to a halt unless the lien is dealt with swiftly.

One might assume that the highway exemption applies to actual road uses only, such that a lien would not be available in respect of paving or curb construction but would be available for below-grade infrastructure, like water and sewer mains. However, section 1.1(a) refers to two distinct concepts: a “highway” and an “improvement” on a highway. Therefore, the *Builders Lien Act* must exempt a “highway” (a particular type of property) separately from the infrastructure that makes it a “road”. The term “highway”, as defined in the *Transportation Act*,³ is broad and includes “land or [an] improvement that becomes or has become a highway” by methods such as simple deposit of a subdivision plan in the Land Title Office showing the land dedicated as highway. As such, a highway need not be a conventional highway in form for the exemption to apply.

While the exact reason – if there is only one – for exempting all highways and improvements thereon from the application of the *Builders Lien Act* is difficult to pin down, there are various plausible explanations. The most obvious is that highways are simply too important to the public interest. Highways are not just for transport, but they provide space for so much other public infrastructure. With so many highways and so much associated infrastructure, consider the administrative burden for municipalities and the province to deal with liens on highways, including vexatious claims. Another explanation is that highway properties are typically not registered in the Land Title Office. If a contractor or subcontractor sought to file a lien, there would be no title to which that lien could attach. However, it is not universally true that highways are untitled; for instance, a titled “travelled road” can become a highway just by public money being spent on it.⁴ A new road created over private property under a negotiated agreement might be retained as titled property to preserve the interests of registered charge holders.

Despite of the exemption, there are circumstances in which work performed on a highway property can serve as the basis for a builders lien, but only where the work is specially connected to a non-highway property, against which the lien is filed. Such was the case in *Pedre Contractors Ltd. v. 2725312 Canada Inc. and 360 Fibre Ltd.*,⁵ a decision of the Supreme

While the exact reason – if there is only one – for exempting all highways and improvements thereon from the application of the *Builders Lien Act* is difficult to pin down, there are various plausible explanations.

Court of British Columbia. There, a contractor had installed three kilometres of conduit for fibre-optic cables under Vancouver streets, ultimately connecting to property owned by one of the defendants, which was used for telecommunications purposes. The unpaid contractor filed a lien against the defendant’s property for the total value of work and materials provided both on-site and under the city streets.

When the contractor commenced a legal action to enforce the lien, the defendant argued that only the work and materials provided to the defendant’s property itself were lienable. However, the Court held that this was an instance where the installation of conduit beyond the property line directly benefited the defendant’s property and was integral and necessary to the improvement overall. It is arguable whether the same outcome could result were the non-highway property also owned by a municipality or other protected public authority; in that case, even though it might be integral and necessary, the improvement would also appear to be caused to be done on the highway by the municipality, thus engaging the exemption.

Contractors and subcontractors working in, on, and around highway properties will want to consider the extent to which

the highway exemption might affect their access to a builders lien. While it is clear that the exemption does not affect specially connected offsite works, there may be complications where a protected public authority is also the owner of the non-highway site. ▸

This article is intended for the general information of organizations in British Columbia. If your organization has specific issues or concerns relating to the matters discussed in this article, please consult a legal advisor.

Sonia Sabota is a founding partner and senior lawyer and Aidan Andrews is an associate lawyer, both with Civic Legal LLP, a British Columbia law firm with expertise in municipal law, land development, construction, procurement, and complicated contract matters. Visit www.civiclegal.ca for contact and additional information.

References:

- 1 S.B.C. 1997, c. 45.
- 2 *Ibid.*, s. 1.1.
- 3 S.B.C. 2004, c. 44, s. 1.
- 4 *Ibid.*, s. 42.
- 5 2004 BCSC 1112.



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Public Works Inspires Our Future

By Nike Juzkiw and Elliott Brown, Proud Parents

It was almost inevitable that our son Eldon would become fascinated with heavy equipment.

His early interest in big machines was made clear when – at age two – he spent his summer and fall months watching the full reconstruction of the road beside our home in Winnipeg. Every morning, he would race to the upstairs window just to see which machines were starting work for the day. Playtime in the yard and walks through the neighbourhood soon became larger-than-life adventures, better than any show on television or video on the Internet.

But Eldon’s fascination didn’t just come from watching the machines; it was nurtured by the people behind them. The operators and public workers who took the time to wave, explain their roles, and show kindness to a curious toddler helped to lay the foundation for something deeper. Their patience and openness gave Eldon a real-world understanding of how advancements in infrastructure are achieved, as well as a respect for the skill and coordination required to make it all come together.

This early exposure to public works sparked an interest not just in big machines, but in how they work. From lawnmowers to cranes, trucks to tractors, Eldon quickly moved beyond the ‘beep beep’ and wheel-turning phase, and wanted to know what each part did, how the machines moved, and why they were built the way they were. His toy machines began to follow real-world rules, complete with detailed storylines and safety protocols and, before long, he was coming down the hall with a homemade contraption, proudly announcing, “I made a hydraulic!”

As parents, we’ve had to grow alongside him. Supporting Eldon’s curiosity means learning how to explain mechanical parts,



▶ Eldon’s love of big machines started with public works, inspiring the youngster to dig deeper into how these machines work. Photos courtesy of Nike Juzkiw and Elliott Brown.



▶ The youngster is a welcome sight in the neighbourhood, always willing to do his part helping cut grass with his zero-turn.

scientific principles, and the evolution of technology. It’s not always easy but it’s always deeply rewarding. We’ve seen firsthand how his play has matured and how his imagination and understanding now go hand in hand.

CPWA events engage the imagination

At his first touch-a-truck event in 2023 in MacGregor, Manitoba, Eldon was a bit overwhelmed, especially by the air horn. But, by the time we attended the City of Winnipeg Public Works Expo a year later, he was hooked – although a little disappointed only that the event wasn’t a permanent fixture at Kildonan Park. By Selkirk’s for Public Works Week in 2025, Eldon was fully immersed in role-play, donning his

personal protective equipment – a safety vest and eye protection – and was eager to try out the controls and attempt to match the precision he’d seen from real operators.

Today, Eldon is the only three-year-old in the neighbourhood who can back a toy 12-volt, zero-turn mower into a parking spot, shut it down properly, and unbuckle his safety harness like a pro.

But more than that, he’s also developed a sense of responsibility and helpfulness. If someone is mowing their lawn nearby, Eldon grabs his bubble push mower or zero-turn and joins in. Pretend or not, he’s doing his part. On walks through the neighbourhood, Eldon often brings tools to ‘fix’ cracks in the sidewalk or chooses his vehicle – pedal tractor, truck, ATV, or mower

– based on what he wants to accomplish. Each choice reflects a plan, a purpose, and a growing understanding of how machines serve people and communities. He’s learning to recognize when something needs repair, not be afraid of it, and think through what tools might be needed. Even in play, he approaches tasks with intention and care, showing a budding sense of responsibility and problem-solving.

Canadian Public Works Association (CPWA) events have done more than

entertain, they’ve sparked curiosity, fostered respect for essential work, and turned early fascination into lifelong learning. These experiences have helped Eldon connect machines to their real-world purposes in his day-to-day. He’s learning to compare, contrast, and dream about trains, planes, and automobiles, and everything in between. These events have played such a vital role in shaping this journey, and we’ll keep showing up, into 2026 and beyond.

They’ve given Eldon more than knowledge; they’ve given him a vision of what’s possible, and the tools to explore it. ▶

Eldon’s parents are the support crew behind a budding machine enthusiast with a safety vest and a mission. With backgrounds in aerospace engineering and public service, they specialize in site logistics, hazard mitigation, and storytelling, helping one small operator explore big machines and even bigger questions, one adventure at a time.

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Public Works and Asset Management:

Do You Know What You Own?

By Wally Wells, P.Eng., Executive Director, Asset Management Saskatchewan

An administrator of one of our rural municipalities told me they hired a retired public works employee to conduct an inventory and location of their culverts, guessing there were about 40. The inventory and location mapping came back with 127 culvert locations – a surprise for the RM’s administration, but not public works. The next question was, ‘Do you know how many of them are properly functioning?’ and the answer was ‘no.’”

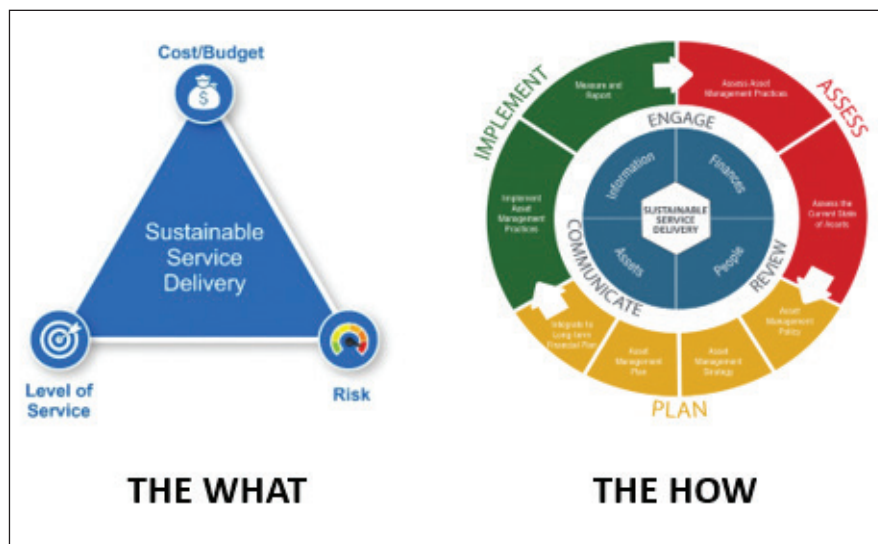
I open with this conversation because it is emblematic of a hundred stories that I have heard about knowing things for valid decision making but are not. These are not isolated cases, nor unique to Saskatchewan.

I asked a councillor who claimed they did not ‘do’ asset management, “How long has your community, as a local government, existed?” He told me that they were incorporated in 1905. My answer to him was that their community has been managing assets for 120 years.

What is asset management?

Asset management is a process that integrates information on all assets and asset classes that provide services to residents. With proper baseline data, it provides financial need estimates and timelines based on the lifecycle of the assets and when replacement or intervention will be required to maintain existing levels of service.

Developed in British Columbia and used by many jurisdictions, the framework



is called ‘Asset Management for Sustainable Service Delivery’ (see above graph).

But the asset management plan is only a small part of the process. Daily recording of maintenance and upgrade of assets must have a process in place for documenting changes for all operational units of managing and maintaining assets, or your plan quickly becomes out of date. The Asset Management Plan is a dynamic document and replacement costs need periodic assessments based on current data and updated.

However, the asset management plan is not a capital plan and only deals with existing infrastructure and assets, plus existing level of service. It also clearly contributes to developing and inputting to the capital

plan and budget, which additionally includes funding new or improved assets not yet in operation. The asset management plan also helps staff and council decide, across all of the services provided for residents, what is most important at the time with available funds to protect services and service quality, while considering minimizing risks to the service, to the assets – and to your reputation.

The asset management plan tells you what needs to be done when but is not absolute in either timing or costs – it is only a guide and only as good as the quality of the data of the baseline. The plan does not tell how to get there nor how to eventually reach financial sustainable service delivery. The Long-Term Financial Plan fills that need with input from the asset management

plan and does not in itself incorporate futures. Other master plan proposals for new or added infrastructure are also not part of the asset management process until they are built and operating.

Plan preparation

Often an engineering firm is hired to prepare the plan. Asset management plan preparation does not necessarily require an engineering discipline but there are tasks within the data needs that do, such as condition assessment or building evaluation.

While the life cycle of the asset is important, the base data normally comes from existing records and from operational personnel – usually in public works and parks. These are the people who know where problems occur within the system and the state of existing infrastructure, as they work with it every day. That knowledge and input for all assets and asset classes is paramount.

Natural assets also need to be part of any plan. Natural assets can – and do – play a major role in our communities. Trees have many advantages such as dissipating heat in climate change-related hot spells. Vegetation root systems are integral in maintaining slopes and erosion control in heavy rain events. Many communities today are developing storm water management ponds as a greening and natural assets that are very effective in differing roles of managing runoff and stormwater. Completing an asset management plan, without the

inclusion of your natural assets, is not providing the complete picture.

What do we mean by an asset class? As an example, a sewage system may include the collection system, the transmission system (which might be a force main), one or more pump stations, and treatment works (which may be a lagoon or treatment plant). All of these assets make up the sewerage system of the community and work together to provide the service, which is wastewater collection transmission and treatment into one asset class.

Here is a story from a Saskatchewan municipality of about 1,200 people that upgraded their sewer system. Work was done on the collection system, force main, and the lagoon expansion, but they neglected the pump station. This meant that when the expanded system was put into operation, work was required on the pump station soon after. The entire system was not considered and investigated as an asset class when the upgrade was underway.

Public works is one of the main sources of data of the major infrastructure in the communities. Finance departments are likely to have an inventory developed and used for required financial reporting. This database is a good start but usually doesn't contain all the information and data needed for asset management. That can be corrected over time.

Final thoughts

A story of one municipality is worth telling and is called the 'Five Minute Story.'

The Public Works department directed their field crews – especially when dealing with buried infrastructure – to take an extra five minutes in the field to take before-and-after pictures, and to document all the information on what they found when having excavated a particular location.

The results of a few years of data uncovered that nearly 30 per cent of what was found in the ground did not match with paper or geographic information system (GIS) records. Because of this, corrections were made to the database as needed and in a timely fashion. They also asked the most experienced on-site personnel to make a qualitative judgement call as to whether the municipality had been doing proactive or reactive maintenance. In analyzing that data, they were able to report to Council the cost of calls that may have been unnecessary, which supported budget requests for proactive maintenance.

Our public works departments and operational staff are key to ongoing asset management programs and have an important and key role in these ongoing programs. The asset management process needs to eventually be built into all functions. ▸

Wally Wells P. Eng. is a life member of American Public Works Association and former Canadian Public Works Association President. He completed 15 years as Executive Director of Asset Management BC and is now the Executive Director of Asset Management Saskatchewan.

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Altona's Purr-fect Response to Stray and Feral Cats

By Paul Adair, Staff Writer

Stray and feral cats are a common sight in many rural Canadian communities, and Altona, Manitoba, was no exception.

Prior to development of the Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) program – run in partnership between the Town of Altona and Furever Friends Cat Rescue – the community was struggling with a pound continually full of cats – with no solution in sight. This overwhelming and ongoing overpopulation challenge resulted in Altona's Animal Control office receiving constant nuisance complaints from residents, including incidents of night howling, garbage raiding, cats fighting, and urine spraying / marking.

“When I first started with Animal Control, we were dealing with a lot of cats, and I was putting out numerous traps at a time,” says Geoff Loewen, Animal Control Officer for the Town of Altona. “An unfixed cat in the wild can have up to three litters of several kittens every year; their numbers – if unchecked – can grow, and grow quickly.”

Stray and feral cats in rural communities often arrive as abandoned pets, unspayed barn cats, or litters born outdoors without

“An unfixed cat in the wild can have up to three litters of several kittens every year; their numbers – if unchecked – can grow, and grow quickly.” – Geoff Loewen, Town of Altona



TNR programs like the one in Altona result in healthier and happier populations of feral cats, as well as less calls from angry residents. Photo courtesy of Furever Friends Cat Rescue.

access to veterinary care or population control. When the numbers rise, it becomes more than a nuisance – when a community has a large feral or unknown cat population, it faces a mix of public health, environmental, and animal welfare problems.

“In addition to the annoying issues like fights and marking, you can have also disease transmission from an unhealthy cat population to pets and humans and, because many of the feral cats are also in poor health, winter living is rough for them with not enough food or warm places to sleep, causing visible suffering for cats and kittens,” says Tracy Harder, Founder of Forever Friends Cat Rescue. “So, we offered a humane solution to the problem.”

The humane solution

While the practice of TNR has been around for many years, to become a solution to dealing with an ongoing cat overpopulation issue, it requires a community that is willing to adopt a more forward-thinking approach.

Forever Friends presented the TNR option solution at a 2017 Altona council meeting, complete with a budget that included costs for vetting – something that went above simply spaying and neutering. As a socially responsible and compassionate approach to overpopulation, stray and feral cats are identified and humanely trapped before they are taken to the vet for spay / neuter, vaccinations, and blood testing.

Altona’s TNR cats are also treated for illness and injuries, and after a brief recovery, the cats are released back to the area where they were trapped. There are also community caretakers who continue to feed, monitor, and shelter the community cats afterwards.

“Prior to the TNR, we would have to try to find a home for the cats – someplace that would take the feral cat, like a farm that needed to control its mice,” says Loewen. “With the TNR program, we find someone to shelter the cat who will feed it and care for it until it’s ready to release back into the community. The cats are familiar with the territory; it knows where to hunt, and it deters new cats from coming into the area.”

TNR effectively controls population growth by stopping reproduction, and the cat colony naturally shrinks over time. Other methods, such as killing or removing,

creates a vacuum effect where new unneutered cats will move into the emptied area because food and shelter are still readily available, and the population rebounds quickly. TNR provides long-term stabilization and a gradual decline in population.

The response

To date, the TNR program has been quite well received in Altona and has encouraged partnerships between Altona Animal Control, the local rescue group, and community residents. What’s more, after several years of progress, the program has delivered the desired result of significantly decreasing the local stray and feral cat population and – along with less cats – less cat related complaints.

The efforts of Forever Friends have also resulted in a healthier and happier population of feral cats that can focus on their primary role, which is helping to eliminate the town of invasive rodents. In addition, Altona residents are having less issues with cat interactions and are seeing the benefits of the program.

“We all know that the only solution to overpopulation is sterilization and, for the most part, Altona has welcomed the TNR program,” says Harder. “The caretakers are positively enthusiastic, and we are all pleased with the results.”

Attracting interest

Forever Friends is proud to have established one of the first successful TNR programs in a rural Manitoba community, and the rescue has been consulted by other organizations wanting to implement their own TNR programs in their communities. As a result of this consultation, TNR is currently being used by Pembina Valley Humane Society (PVHS) in Morden, Manitoba, and by Heart for Strays in St. Jean, Manitoba.

“We encourage other towns to look to TNR to stabilize outdoor / feral cat populations,” says Harder. “Preventing new litters through spay / neuter will reduce cat nuisance behaviours, such as spraying, fighting, and the noise that come with intact, roaming males. It also improves welfare for the feral cats and fewer kittens will be born to die and, while it takes a lot of volunteers to get a TNR program to work, the benefits are worth it.”

These advantages and the long-term payoff of adopting a TNR program are something that communities need to keep in mind, especially during the hectic early stages of implementation.

“When you first start off, it’s going to get busy and you’re going to be potentially catching a lot of cats,” says Loewen. “But once you get through the cycle and start removing the cats that are reproducing and causing the issues – that’s when you’re going to start seeing the benefits of the program.”

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Developing Municipal Winter Maintenance Policy

By Neeraj Saroj, P.Eng., MBA, Senior Operations Engineer - Roadways & Transportation, City of Regina

Whether it's public safety, transportation, accessibility, environmental management, or budgeting, winter maintenance operations influence nearly every aspect of municipal life.

Winter maintenance operations are complex and costly, requiring specialized equipment and skilled staff. Snowplows, salt spreaders, and trained operators keep cities moving but what ensures efficiency year after year is a resilient and responsive winter maintenance policy – a static policy no longer meets the needs of modern municipalities, and regular review and updates are essential to address unpredictable winters, shifting public expectations, and evolving sustainability goals.

The purpose of a winter maintenance policy is to provide a clear, consistent framework for how municipalities manage snow and ice. This policy ensures that winter operations are not ad hoc but guided by defined objectives, service standards, and accountability

measures. At its core, the policy aims to safeguard public safety by reducing accidents and ensuring emergency access, maintain mobility for residents, businesses, and visitors during winter conditions, support accessibility for vulnerable populations, balance operational efficiency with fiscal responsibility, minimize environmental impacts from salt, sand, and fuel use, and build public trust through transparency and predictable service delivery. By articulating these purposes, winter maintenance policy becomes more than a technical manual, it is a social contract between the city and its community.

Work heats up in the winter months

Municipal winter maintenance programs typically cover roads, sidewalks, and alleys, with heightened attention to critical areas such as hospital routes, schools, downtown hubs, transit corridors, and busy pedestrian zones. Key activities include snow plowing of streets, alleys, bike lanes, and sidewalks, ice control on roads and pedestrian routes, snow removal and storage, clearing catch basins, and monitoring, documentation,

and reporting. Despite fiscal constraints, municipalities must deliver enhanced service levels across expanding infrastructure.

A well-written policy provides clarity to residents and businesses about what to expect during winter. It outlines which roads and sidewalks are prioritized after snowfall, enabling residents to plan daily activities. For councils and senior management, the policy defines service standards and timelines, such as plowing in school zones or residential areas. It also clarifies roles and responsibilities for operational teams, ensuring crews act quickly without confusion. Help desk staff can better inform callers about timelines and, in doing so, build greater trust in city administration.

Like any municipal policy, winter maintenance must be reviewed and updated frequently to reflect socio-economic changes, community needs, and strategic goals. Reviews support budget planning, equipment procurement, and staff recruitment and training. Challenges often arise in defining clear objectives and service levels. Municipalities sometimes replicate policies from other cities, but what works elsewhere may not suit local conditions, and each community requires a tailored approach.

Identifying key objectives of a winter maintenance policy is critical. These objectives may include snow plowing and ice control on roads and sidewalks, clearing back alleys, ensuring safety in school zones, managing snow storage sites, addressing blowing snow with fencing or ridging, and maintaining designated snow routes. The policy should also specify what falls outside its scope, ensuring clarity for staff and residents.

Setting standards

Service standards are another cornerstone of policy. Levels of Service (LOS) define thresholds of service provided to residents and businesses. A LOS matrix helps policy-makers measure and communicate the quality and extent of services. Balancing community expectations, funding, and risk is essential. As such, policy documents should focus on customer LOS – qualitative measures describing how services are perceived, while procedural details belong in separate technical documents (typically for internal staff and contractors). This distinction prevents

confusion and ensures policies remain accessible to the public.

Determining LOS requires consultation with internal and external stakeholders. Internal teams may include transit, fleet services, solid waste, fire, finance, procurement, communications, bylaw, and legal departments. External stakeholders range from school boards and hospitals to business associations, accessibility groups, and neighboring municipalities. Public engagement, through surveys or focus groups, aligns services with community needs, gauges willingness to pay, and communicates risks. Policies must also meet statutory and regulatory requirements, such as bylaws related to winter maintenance.

Changes in LOS affect a wide range of stakeholders, making communication vital. A robust plan should target internal operations teams, senior management and council members, and external stakeholders including residents, businesses, schools, hospitals, and police services. Ideally, a multi-year communications budget should be allocated to prepare the public and reinforce awareness of new standards.

Developing, reviewing, and updating a winter maintenance policy is not a one-time task, but rather an ongoing process requiring collaboration across departments, alignment with strategic goals, and flexibility to adapt to changing conditions. Yes, challenges exist, such as balancing costs, environmental impact, public demand, and operational constraints. Yet opportunities abound with improved service delivery, greater transparency, stronger public trust, and more resilient cities.

Ultimately, winter maintenance policy must be treated as a living framework – one that evolves with the community and supports the broader mission of safety, sustainability, and service excellence. ▸

Neeraj Saroj, P.Eng., MBA is a Senior Operations Engineer - Roadways & Transportation with the City of Regina. He has vast experience in the fields of business development, engineering & operations management in private and public sectors, and is a successful change agent with proven track record.

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Safety Beneath Our Streets:

How BC 1 Call Supports Public Works



By Donna Grant, President,
BC 1 Call

Every year, thousands of projects reshape B.C. communities: road improvements, water-main replacements, fibre-optic expansions, and the day-to-day maintenance that keeps our homes and workplaces running. Beneath each of these worksites lies a complex, invisible web of infrastructure: gas lines, electrical cables, communication systems, and pipelines. Managing that underground network safely isn't just an operational priority; it's a public responsibility.

At the heart of that responsibility is a single, proactive action that pre-emptively stops damage: contacting BC 1 Call before breaking ground.

Understanding ground disturbance

Ground disturbance covers almost everything public works teams do, whether it is road reconstruction, storm-sewer repairs, grading, tree planting, pole installation, and even signpost replacement. These are everyday activities, but each carries risk. A single strike can cut power, disrupt emergency communications, contaminate groundwater, or cause serious injury.

The good news is that every one of these incidents is preventable. Submitting a locate request through www.bc1c.ca connects excavators directly with the owners of underground infrastructure in their work area. It's free, quick, and ensures everyone working in or near buried utilities has the information needed to dig safely.



For municipalities, this process provides two layers of protection. It safeguards public infrastructure and ensures that excavation within city limits, whether done by internal crews or external contractors, meets the same high safety standard.

Why municipalities are central to prevention

Public works departments are among British Columbia's most frequent ground disturbers. Whether installing new services, maintaining culverts, or responding to emergencies, their crews spend more time in the ground than anyone else.

Embedding BC 1 Call requests into municipal workflows strengthens safety, coordination, and public trust. Many communities in the province already lead by example, requiring locate requests for every planned excavation, even for internal work. This consistent practice prevents damage and creates a transparent record of diligence that's invaluable for audits, insurance reviews, or investigations.

It also sets the tone for others. When municipalities hold themselves to the same standards they expect from permit holders, they reinforce a shared message: damage prevention is everyone's responsibility. That consistency builds credibility and sets an example for contractors and developers alike.

Technology and modernization

As British Columbia's infrastructure expands, the demand for faster, clearer communication grows. BC 1 Call continues to modernize its locate-request system to make safety easier.

Upcoming enhancements in early 2026 will simplify revisions and relocations by keeping one continuous ticket number throughout a project's life cycle.

Excavators will soon be able to map multiple dig locations. This feature enhances virtual white lining, giving facility owners and locators precise information for complex or extended worksites. For example, a contractor installing signage at both ends of a parking lot will be able to mark the exact dig spots, all on one request.

Another new option will allow excavators to receive text message updates from facility owners and locators who use SMS communication. Because timely coordination is essential to prevent damage, this feature makes communication faster, more convenient, and easier to document.

From compliance to culture

Ground disturbance safety is about more than following regulations. It's about creating a culture of prevention and care. Public works professionals live that value every day. They know that what lies underground is as vital as what's built above. When things go wrong – a ruptured

main, a severed fibre line, or a gas release – they are often first on scene, managing hazards, restoring services, and protecting the public.

By embedding BC 1 Call into daily operations, municipalities turn compliance into leadership. Each locate request represents an investment of minutes that protects years of infrastructure life and public confidence.

Practical takeaways for municipal crews

A strong safety culture thrives on consistency. These everyday practices make a lasting impact:

- Include locate requests in every project plan. Treat them as essential as PPE or traffic control.
- Allow time for responses. Submit requests at least three business days before excavation.
- Verify and confirm all responses before starting work.
- Dig with care. Within one metre of a marked facility, use hand or hydrovac methods.
- Refresh and review. Reconfirm locates if weather or project changes alter markings.
- Debrief after completion. Capture lessons learned to strengthen future planning.

These small, repeatable habits reduce risk, protect crews and reinforce professionalism across the public works sector.

Collaboration and continuous learning

No single organization can prevent all utility damage. BC 1 Call's strength lies in partnership and education, working alongside municipalities, utilities, and industry groups to make sure everyone has the tools and knowledge to prevent damage.

Municipal participation keeps mapping data accurate, assets protected, and crews informed. BC 1 Call supports that effort through training, outreach sessions, and shared communication materials that municipalities can use for staff orientation or public education.

Collaboration isn't just about coordinating projects, it's about building a province-wide understanding that safety is continuous, evolving, and shared. When municipalities bring that perspective to their crews and contractors, prevention becomes part of the culture rather than an afterthought.

A simple action with powerful impact

Every safe project begins with knowledge. Before any shovel hits the ground, submitting a locate request is the one step that protects everything else.

Public works professionals are the stewards of what lies beneath our streets. By making BC 1 Call part of every ground disturbance, you're not just meeting a requirement, you're protecting the connections that make our communities strong.

Visit www.bc1c.ca to learn more about BC 1 Call's free locate services, modernization initiatives, and educational resources for public works professionals across British Columbia. ▶

BC 1 Call is the link between the excavating community and the owners of underground infrastructure. By contacting BC 1 Call, private landowners and commercial excavators reduce the risk of personal injury and property damage. BC 1 Call has over 365 members across British Columbia including municipalities, communication service providers, gas and pipeline companies, and irrigation and improvement districts.



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Stainless Steel Pools: European Innovation Redefines Sustainable Aquatic Design

By Michael Rusz,
Silverscape Pools & Spas

Stainless steel pools have long been a hallmark of European aquatic architecture – and their reputation for quality, efficiency, and sustainability is now shaping the Canadian market. First pioneered in Austria during the 1960s, stainless steel quickly displaced traditional pool materials like aluminum and concrete, which struggled to withstand constant exposure to moisture and pool chemicals.

Today, as architects and municipalities place greater emphasis on lifecycle cost and environmental performance, stainless steel pools stand out as a high-value, future-ready alternative. They deliver unmatched longevity, exceptional hygiene, and a smaller ecological footprint – all while providing striking visual appeal.

Limitless design freedom

Modern fabrication methods allow stainless steel pools to be created in virtually any size or shape – from International Swimming Federation-certified competition basins to curvilinear leisure or therapy pools. Integrated stainless features such as neck showers, hydromassage lounges, bubble benches, and counter-current swim systems can be seamlessly incorporated into the design. Advances in welding and finishing techniques have produced extremely precise joints and surfaces. Hydraulically optimized overflow channels ensure perfect circulation, while slip-resistant finishes and electro-etched lane markings enhance both safety and aesthetics. As a result, designers can

Stainless steel pools stand out as a high-value, future-ready alternative to the traditional municipal pool, and provide excellent lifecycle cost and environmental performance. Photos courtesy of Silverscape Pools & Spas.



achieve bold architectural visions without compromising practicality or compliance.

Hygiene and maintenance advantages

Unlike tiled concrete, stainless steel is non-porous and joint-free, which eliminates the tiny crevices where bacteria, algae, and mold thrive. Its smooth, reflective surface is easy to clean and requires far less chemical treatment, reducing both operational costs and staff workload. The material's longevity is largely due to its passive layer – a thin, invisible film that regenerates automatically when scratched. Formed through the interaction of chromium, nickel, molybdenum, and oxygen, this nano-protective coating ensures corrosion resistance even in highly chlorinated or freezing environments. This self-healing property makes stainless steel ideal for both indoor and outdoor pools exposed to Canada's wide temperature variations.



With a surface naturally resisting scale and biofilm buildup, stainless steel means ease of maintenance and winterization is a breeze.

Sustainable by nature

Growing attention to sustainability has highlighted stainless steel's advantages beyond durability. In 2019, a Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) conducted by Prof. Dr. Andreas Gerdes of IONYS AG compared two standard construction methods: reinforced concrete pools finished with tiles, and stainless steel pools.

The study evaluated every phase of the product life cycle – from raw material extraction and manufacturing to use and eventual recycling – following international

environmental standards. The results were decisive:

- Stainless steel pools showed 38 to 59 per cent lower environmental impact across all measured categories.
- The most significant reductions occurred in photo-oxidant pollution (smog formation) and overall energy consumption.

Why the difference?

Traditional tiled concrete pools require large quantities of reinforcing steel, cement, adhesives, and ceramic tiles – all materials with high embodied energy and CO₂ emissions. Stainless steel pools, on the other hand, use less concrete overall, rely on recyclable material, and have a much longer lifespan before any refurbishment is needed. Their modular construction and reusability make them exceptionally material-efficient and environmentally responsible.

This study underscores a growing realization: stainless steel pools aren't just elegant – they are also ecologically superior. For communities aiming to align new recreational infrastructure with climate goals or LEED certification, the material offers measurable sustainability benefits.

Lightweight strength and fast installation

From an engineering perspective, stainless steel pool shells act as self-supporting structures. Unlike traditional concrete basins that require heavy reinforcement and waterproof coatings, stainless steel pools rely on prefabricated wall and floor panels welded together on-site.

These systems typically require only simple strip foundations or small concrete

pads to support built-in stairs, surge channels, and water features. With no need for curing or waterproofing membranes, construction timelines are dramatically shortened. A 600-square-metre (~ 6,500 square foot) stainless steel pool can be fully installed within six to eight weeks, minimizing site disruption and project risk. Because the walls (approximately 2.5 millimetres) and floors (approximately 1.5 millimetres) are precision-fabricated, structural tolerances are tight and easily maintained. If mechanical damage ever occurs, repairs are quick and local – sections can be re-welded and polished without compromising integrity or aesthetics.

Long-term cost efficiency

Although the upfront price of stainless steel might exceed that of concrete, its total cost of ownership is often lower. Operators save on resurfacing, re-tiling, and grout repairs – expenses that accumulate over the decades. Each fixture, from drains to handrails, is welded directly to the shell, creating a leak-free, monolithic structure.

The reflective finish also enhances lighting efficiency, helping indoor facilities reduce electrical consumption. Combined with reduced water and chemical use, the result is a pool that pays for itself through operational savings.

Easy care and seasonal operation

For operators, stainless steel simplifies daily maintenance. Routine cleaning can be done with a mild detergent or high-pressure washer – no aggressive acids or scrubbing required. The surface naturally resists scale and biofilm buildup, allowing for reduced

chlorine levels and healthier air quality in natatoriums.

Outdoor versions are equally straightforward to maintain. During winterization, the water level needs to be lowered by only about 30 centimetres (12 inches), after which the basin can safely freeze without damage. In spring, the remaining water is drained, and the pool can be cleaned and refilled within a day – no tiles to repair, no coatings to replace.

Building for the future

As Canadian municipalities, hospitality operators, and wellness developers modernize their aquatic amenities, stainless steel pools are emerging as a strategic investment in both durability and sustainability. They align with long-term environmental policies, minimize lifecycle emissions, and help facilities achieve cleaner operations with lower maintenance overhead.

Their design flexibility also enables architects to create luminous, inviting aquatic spaces that feel both modern and timeless. With over sixty years of proven success across Europe, stainless steel pools are no longer a niche innovation – they represent the next generation of intelligent aquatic infrastructure: hygienic, efficient, and environmentally responsible. ▶

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EMERGENCY LIGHTING AND EQUIPMENT

Mega-Tech 4

EMERGENCY VEHICLE LIGHTING / EQUIPMENT

HID Vision Canada 33

ENGINEERING ASSOCIATION

APEGA 23

FLEET AND TRANSPORTATION MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE

Nektar Software 15

HEATED WIPER BLADES

Everblades Inc. 34

HEAVY EQUIPMENT PARTS AND SERVICE

The Gear Centre Group 27

INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTS

EBAC Industrial Products Inc. 23

INDUSTRY EVENTS

The 2026 North American Snow Conference 31
 WWETT 2026 8

LAW FIRMS

Civic Legal 21

MARKING FLAGS AND MARKING PRODUCTS

Blackburn Mfg. IBC

MUNICIPAL EQUIPMENT

Bobcat OBC

PIPING AND WATER SOLUTIONS

Insituform Technologies Ltd. 17

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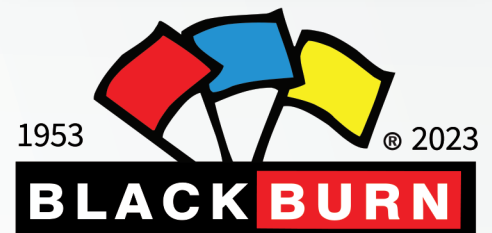
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