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News

## Snowfall hits region, closing schools and causing accidents

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By KAREN WORKMAN  
For The Daily Tribune

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An accident in Addison Township early this morning brought down a DTE Energy utility pole, resulting in the closure of Lakeville Road between Rochester and Lake George Roads.

"That's a sub-transmission 40,000 volt line, so it's not affecting any (electrical) customers," said Scott Simons, spokesman for DTE Energy.

The high voltage line feeds into power substations and is not a part of the immediate distribution network.

According to the Oakland County Sheriff's Office, the accident happened at 7:39 a.m. when a vehicle struck a utility pole while driving on Lakeville Road at Curtis Road.

"We have two crews assigned to that job," Simons said. "As soon as they can make it safe to get the power line away from the road, they'll be doing that."

Simons expects the crews will have cleared and reopened the roadway by early afternoon.

Permanent repairs will take longer, however, because a new pole will have to be shipped to the area.

Despite the Road Commission for Oakland County being out in full force to clear the roadways, road conditions are still bad and several accidents throughout the county are being reported.

"We do have all of our trucks out, but it's been snowing harder than we can keep up with for the last three hours," said Craig Bryson, spokesman for the Road Commission for Oakland County.

Eight crashes, in addition to the Addison Township accident, have been reported to the Oakland County Sheriff's Office this morning.

Crashes are being reported in:

- Commerce Township off of Traditional
- Highland Township on W. Highland Road near Hickory Ridge Road

- Oakland Township, W. Snell and Orion Roads
- Rochester Hills, Walton and Adams Road
- Rochester Hills, spinout on Walton Road west of Adams Road
- Rochester Hills/Oakland Township, Orion and Dutton Roads
- Rochester Hills, M-59 south of Rochester Road
- Springfield Township, a rollover accident on Davisburg Road at Big Lake Road

Sgt. Brian Lippard of the Oakland County Sheriff's Office is advising drivers to, "Be cautious and alert and give yourself plenty of time getting to and from your destination."

All public school districts in the county are closed today, as are most private schools.

"Oakland Schools is closed due to inclement weather and the closing of all local school districts," said a message on the voicemail of Shelley Yorke Rose, director of communications for Oakland Schools.

Bryson said 106 trucks, which is the RCOC's entire fleet, are currently on the roadways and have been out since about 2 a.m.

"Part of the problem right now is that our trucks are stuck in rush hour traffic. Things really slow down during rush hour and of course, we can't move any faster than anyone else," Bryson said.

The full fleet will stay out on the roads until at least 4 p.m., when some of the drivers who first started their shifts around midnight will be sent home to rest, Bryson said.

The snowfall is expected to start tapering off in the afternoon, according to the National Weather Service in White Lake Township.

What the roads will look like for the evening commute depends on exactly when the snow stops falling, Bryson said.

"The forecast we're seeing is that the snow will potentially stop falling around 4 p.m. If that's the case, there's a good chance at least the main roads will be in better shape," Bryson said. "If it doesn't stop, then all bets are off and it could be a mess again."

The National Weather Service is reporting that three inches of snow had accumulated in Farmington by 7 a.m. this morning.

"We probably have about that in White Lake too," said Heather Orow, meteorologist with the National Weather Service.

Orow said the snow began falling its heaviest after 6 a.m. this morning and that a total of 5 to 8 inches is expected to accumulate today.

"There will be some light showers around tonight and then into tomorrow we do have a few showers as well, but we shouldn't get any significant accumulation," Orow said,

Temperatures are around 27 degrees today and a high of 32 is expected. Similar temperatures are predicted for Tuesday as well.

Bryson said the RCOC will keep a "significant force" on the roads through the evening rush hour.

"We'll send many of the drivers home in the early evening, keep some trucks on overnight and then come back on full force tomorrow morning," Bryson said.

Subdivision roads and side streets could be plowed as early as Tuesday.

"It depends on how quickly we can get the main roads cleaned up," Bryson said. "At the very earliest, we may be able to start getting into subdivisions tomorrow or it could be Wednesday."

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