

Best Practices for Road Weather Management

Version 3.0

Montana DOT Traveler Information System

The Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) provides extensive traveler information to Montana's driving public. This information includes winter roadway conditions, highway construction projects, road closures, accident and incident reports, load and speed restrictions, and a variety of other traveler information.

System Components: The traveler information system consists of a host of media including the Internet, Montana's 511 phone service, highway advisory radio systems, road weather information stations (RWIS) and cameras, and dynamic message signs.

System Operations: Detailed information is provided by field personnel and then entered into a database by division area office staff. The database runs on an Oracle platform and information is disseminated to the web and phone service. The dynamic message signs are controlled by using a specialized control software package.

Transportation Outcome(s): Traveler information needs continue to grow and change as new technologies become available. The information MDT provides is utilized by an increasing number of people, with more than a million calls to our 511 system since deployment in 2003 and more than 14 million hits on the website annually. By providing travelers with accurate information through various means it allows them to make informed travel decisions. The benefits include avoiding excessive delays, being prepared for adverse weather, and determining what route best meets their needs.

Implementation Issues: One ongoing challenge with the system is providing accurate and timely information. Another open question is the cost-effectiveness of utilizing portable hardware versus permanent hardware for data collection and dissemination of information. Finally, software integration amongst products built by various manufacturers has been another challenge.

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Reference(s):

- "Road Weather Information System", MDT Traveler Information Website, www.mdt511.com

Keywords: traveler information, winter conditions, highway construction, road closures, accident reports, incident reports, load restrictions, speed restrictions



Figure MT-2. Components of traveler information system.