

# Prepping Equipment For The Next Winter Storm



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Under normal circumstances, the sight of snow falling doesn't inspire much trepidation. But if you're in the middle of a raging winter storm, your perspective can change pretty quickly. Snowstorms "are natural disasters of a sort," says Tim Gibbons, CEO and president of [The Service Innovators](#) in Chicago.

That reality helps to explain all the planning that snow service companies put in to responding to major storms when they strike.

Equipment is obviously an indispensable part of storm response, and Tom Canete, president and CEO of [Canete Snow Management](#) in New Jersey, says that aspect of storm prep starts long before anything shows up on the weather radar – months before, in fact.

"At the end of every season, we put away our snow-only equipment in perfect running order. We always repair it and clean it very well and treat it with a salt-neutralizer spray," he explains, noting that it's important to use hot water when washing snow removal equipment, as this helps to get rid of any salt. "We grease everything, and we replace any parts that are broken."



Build relationships with businesses in noncompetitive industries to get access to additional equipment during a big snow event. Photo: Canete Snow Management

The equipment might be put away each spring, but it is not forgotten. Trucks that are used for snow services only need special attention, Canete says. Rather than letting these vehicles sit untouched all summer long, or just starting them occasionally as he used to do, Canete now schedules an employee to actually drive and operate these vehicles every other week during the non-winter months.

"We put a few miles on them; that's very important. If you don't do that, when you go out there to fire up the trucks, you may find the tires dry-rotted, you've got brake problems and hydraulic problems, and so on," he explains.

The same every-other-week regimen applies to large loaders and smaller sidewalk equipment.

"We drive them around the yards; not only are they run, but they're moved," Canete says, noting that there's no way to predict when an early season storm will hit and everything needs to be ready to go.

Vincent Di Leonardo, president and CEO of [Empire Landscaping and Snow Plowing](#) in New York, says his equipment preparation in the fall includes ordering plenty of spare parts. "We place orders for extras of everything that we need – for example, hydraulic hoses and rubber edges and shoes for pusher boxes," he says.

Having an inventory of spare parts on hand is important during big storms because the equipment is being worked hard, and there's a good chance that some replacement part or repair will be needed – and time is of the essence.