

When the snow is falling and the wind starts blowing, rural areas can experience large snow drifts that block roads and driveways. Many of these drifting problems happen in the same place year after year.

While we can't keep snow from blowing, there are ways to influence the wind. Properly designed and maintained snow fences can reduce or eliminate these problem areas.

By having a snow fence on your land, you can help make Iowa roads safer this winter while making some extra cash.

How Can Snow Fences Benefit You?

- Improve accessibility between farmsteads, towns, and services.
- Provide a service to your family, friends, and neighbors.
- Reduce soil erosion.
- Offer wildlife habitat through living or standing corn snow fences.

How Can Snow Fences Benefit Everyone Else?

- Lower snow removal cost.
- Create safer, more predictable travel conditions.
- Reduce blockages and drifts.
- Lower the crash rate during snowy, windy conditions.
- Increase visibility by reducing blowing snow.
- Decrease freezing and thawing effects on the roadway.
- Reduce after-storm cleanup time.

WE WANT TO WORK WITH YOU!

Farmers and landowners are the key to the success of the DOT Snow Fence Program.

"It's amazing to see how well snow fences can help prevent drifting problems and improve visibility. I can really see the benefits of snow fence along the roadway."

*- Walter Phillips,
Pocahontas County farmer*



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LEARN MORE

Scan the QR code to get more information about our Snow Fence Program at iowadot.gov.



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IOWA'S COOPERATIVE SNOW FENCE PROGRAM

Snow fences and windbreaks have been used in the farming community since the first settlers arrived in Iowa. They reduce drifting and improve visibility, making roads safer in winter. Through the Iowa DOT's Cooperative Snow Fence Program, farmers and landowners like you can help keep Iowa's roads clear and safe.



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TYPES OF SNOW FENCES

Structural Fence Options

Permanent Fence

- 6- to 8-foot-tall lightweight fence with wooden posts or vinyl-coated high-tensile steel webbing with steel posts.
- Posts are placed parallel to the road and perpendicular to the prevailing winter winds.
- Agreements are a minimum of five years.
- Landowners are compensated \$1 per linear foot of fence.

Temporary Fence

- 4-foot-tall, portable fence made of plastic or wood.
- Can be installed by either the landowner or DOT workers after harvest and removed before planting.
- Agreements go from fall to spring and can be renewed each year.

Things to Consider

Distance: The fence should be placed away from the road a distance of 35 times the height of the fence. *(Example for an 8-foot-tall fence: $8 \times 35 = 280$ -foot set-back)*

Height: The height of the fence depends on how much snow you want to be able to trap, and how much snowfall is common for your area. One row of six-foot-tall fence is recommended for maximum efficiency.

Example of a temporary snow fence.



Standing Corn Fence

Leaving several rows of corn standing throughout the winter can serve as an effective natural snow fence. This helps prevent snow from blowing and drifting onto the roadway. They have large snow storage capacity between rows and also offer valuable shelter to wildlife.



Example of a standing corn fence. Notice the snow trapped between the stalks.

How it Works

- The farmer leaves 6–24 rows of corn standing after harvest.
- Rows should run parallel to the roadway and be located approximately 200 feet from the edge of the road.
- The corn can be hand-harvested in the fall or picked in early spring before planting season.

Compensation

- The DOT will pay the farmer/landowner based on the corn's assumed yield.
- Price-per-bushel is determined using the statewide average cash price on August 1 each year, plus \$2 per bushel.
- Agreements go from fall to spring and can be renewed each year.

Standing Bale

Hay or corn stalk bales make for an excellent snow fence and are easier to set up than structural snow fences. Standing bale fences are a great option for farmers who are unable or would prefer not to leave standing corn rows.

How it Works

- Landowners simply line up the bales end to end, parallel to the roadway.
- Bales should be placed approximately 200 feet from the edge of the roadway.

Compensation

- The DOT will pay the farmer/landowner \$1 per foot of bale running parallel to the roadway.

Living Snow Fence

The USDA has a Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) that gives a landowner the opportunity to set aside land for living snow fence. This program allows the landowner to receive annual payments for up to 15 years if they agree to plant two rows of trees, or a combination of trees and shrubs, along with 75-100 feet of native grasses. More information on the CRP can be found at the local [Farm Service Agency](#) or [Natural Resource Conservation Service](#) websites.

