



Stay Safe on the Mountain

Snow event - answers to commonly asked questions

When it snows on kunanyi/Mt Wellington the City of Hobart works hard to help visitors make the most of their mountain experience and provide safe access in alpine conditions.

This guide provides answers to many questions commonly asked about access after a significant snow event. It should help you plan your trip and choose a walk or experience suited to your interest, capability and weather, understand how to stay safe and be properly prepared for alpine snow conditions.

1. Why is the road closed?

- The road to the summit of kunanyi/Mt Wellington is open all year unless snow, ice or other dangers pose a risk to the public. The City of Hobart works as quickly as it can to clear the road of snow so that it can be re-opened to the public as soon as possible.
- Pinnacle Road is the highest and busiest sealed alpine road in Tasmania. It is narrow with steep embankments. Ice can create invisible and very slippery, dangerous driving conditions.
- The road can be closed ahead of severe weather conditions as a safety measure.

2. When the road will re-open?

- We don't know for sure as it depends on weather and conditions but when the status changes we post updates to the City of Hobart website. This can happen in stages, so while you may not be able to get to the summit straight away the road can often be open to The Springs while we clear the road higher up of snow and ice.

Check <http://www.hobartcity.com.au/snow> for the current road status.

3. Why can't the road open sooner?

- Snow often melts fairly quickly on Pinnacle Road, but ice can linger in shady areas and pose serious safety hazards to motor vehicles.
- Sometimes the dangers are not visible from where the gate has been closed. Dangerous snow or ice conditions may be just around the corner or higher up the mountain. There are no safe places to park large numbers of vehicles or turn cars around between The Springs and Big Bend.

4. How is the decision made to close the road in snow or ice conditions?

- The City of Hobart closes Pinnacle Road at either Bracken Lane or The Springs when snow or ice conditions make it unsafe for public vehicles. Our staff carry out regular road inspections and monitor weather forecasts and conditions.
- The road can be closed ahead of dangerous weather conditions to ensure vehicles are not caught out in hazardous alpine conditions.

5. Why is the public not able to go past the gate, even with snow chains or a 4WD?

- Road conditions need to be safe for all. Opening the road to some vehicles (i.e. 4WDs) during snow clearing operations would also hinder clearing operations and delay the time it takes to re-open Pinnacle Road to all vehicles.

6. Can I walk up the road even though the gate is closed?

- You can walk up the road when the gate is closed, but please be aware snow clearing operations may be taking place.



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7. How far is it to the snow?

Depending on conditions and where the road is open to, snow could be 100 metres away, or several kilometres. Distance to the snow will also change throughout the day.

Tips about distance to snow:

- Try to find out from other visitors or City of Hobart staff if they are present where the snow is and its condition. Is it icy? How deep is the snow? Is it easy to walk through or difficult?
- It is very important to be prepared for alpine conditions. Remember while it may feel relatively sheltered and safe at The Springs, conditions can quickly change on the mountain, and it will be much colder at the summit. For every 100 metres you ascent the temperature typically falls one degree.
- If the snow is only a couple of hundred metres up the road, beyond the closed gate, it might be easiest for you to walk along the road to the snow.
- Inform yourself of the distances by road from The Springs to The Chalet, and also the summit. It's a long way even in good weather.

Although the road and tracks in the foothills of kunanyi/Mt Wellington are relatively sheltered, once people move past Big Bend or are near or on the summit, conditions can rapidly become freezing. Will chill is a major danger at higher elevations. 'Feels like' temperatures can plummet to minus 20 degrees! The summit often feels the full brunt of the Roaring Forties.

8. Snow walks

- To help you choose a walk or experience suited to your interest, capability and weather conditions.
- Have a look at the flier [Great Short Walks in the Snow](#) – which has a map. The big sign on the Springs Hut and the main trackhead signs around the Springs also have good maps.
- Three main choices are:
 - **Easy** - 15 minute loop – the lookout circuit, including old Exhibition Gardens track.
 - **Mid** - 45 minute return – Lenah Valley Track out to Sphinx Rock return.

- **Great Short Walk** – 3-4 hours return. Walk up the Pinnacle Track to the snow line. This route can vary in length and time depending on your needs, weather and conditions.
 - You can just walk up to snow and then return depending on how far up Pinnacle Track the snow line is.
 - You may wish to keep going and include the walk along the Organ Pipes Track all the way to the Chalet and return (up to 4 hours return).

9. Can I walk to the summit?

- It is possible to follow the road to the summit in snow or, **if you are well prepared, experienced and with a group** you can take Pinnacle Track then the Zig Zag Track onto the summit.
- Remember the summit is 1271 metres above sea level and exposed to wind gusts that can exceed 100kmh. Wind chill makes hypothermia a serious risk to walkers if not properly prepared.

10. Be prepared to turn back

- Alpine conditions can change very quickly - you should always be prepared to turn back. Low cloud can reduce visibility to a few metres and all tracks can be slippery in snow and ice.

11. Be prepared for alpine conditions!

- **GIVE YOURSELF TIME:** Check when the sun sets and give yourself plenty of time to get off the mountain well before dark.
- **WEAR WARM & WATERPROOF CLOTHING:** If walking to the summit you must have warm and waterproof clothing. Do not attempt in snow or poor visibility unless you are very experienced, well prepared, and with others.
- **LEAVE A PLAN:** Tell someone reliable where you are going and your anticipated return time. This will help in an emergency. It's safer to walk with others.
- **PHONE COVERAGE:** Mobile phone reception is variable. Install the Emergency+ app on your smartphone and learn how to use it: emergencyapp.triplezero.gov.au

