

On March 5 & 6, Deputy Andy Grunhovd and Dirk Van Ryswyk, from the City of Northwood, spent time at the Northwood-Kensett Elementary teaching the students about snow pile and tunnel safety. Dirk was able to give his perspective to the students as an operator of the equipment and what they do to move snow. He explained that while the city pushes the snow to the side of the road and into piles that they come back and then clean it up later. He told the students that they have already seen tunnels in the snow in the right-of-way, or as the students know it the area from the sidewalk to the road. The danger is that the city, state and county crews will come back and “wing” it down and back caving in those tunnels. Dirk also explained to the kids that many of the snow piles will be getting hauled away as well as the big piles in parking lots and dead end streets which makes them not safe to play on either, certainly not without an adult outside with them. Deputy Grunhovd also spoke about using the buddy system and the best and safest ways to dig tunnels. A couple of areas the kids can safely play on are at the elementary and on the south side of the high school parking lot. Ask the kids about it, we’re sure they’d love to tell you more about it. Included are some of the safety tips that were presented.

### **Snow Pile and Tunnel Safety Rules**

1. Avoid building or playing in snow forts near roads, water and fences. Those hazards add to the danger, and because big snow piles usually are along roads or in parking lots, the chances of being hit by a car or a snowplow add to the risk.
  1. This includes area from the road to the sidewalk
  2. Parking lots
2. Play on snow piles in your yard or a friends’ yard, the parks, or even the large pile at the high school but only on the part farthest from the cars.
3. Keep entrances to snow forts short. Long tunnels can collapse, leaving no room to breathe.
4. No one goes in the tunnel unless there is a spotter. A brother or sister, friend or adult are all acceptable.
5. Only one person in the tunnel at a time or always have a buddy on the outside.
6. Anyone going through the tunnel has to do it on their belly.
7. If parts of the tunnel start to fall out on the inside, get out immediately and don’t use the tunnel again.
8. If there is a snow tunnel collapse;
  1. The spotter must immediately attempt to help the person in the tunnel out. If they cannot get the tunneler out immediately, they are to come inside to get assistance from an adult or call 911.
  2. The person in the tunnel should use their arms and hands to create an air pocket in front of their face (hence the belly travel) so they can breathe until rescued.
9. Never throw snow or ice at anyone’s face or push them face first into the snow!

### **Snow Tunnel Collapse Prevention**

1. Dig down, not up so as to maintain as much strength in the roof as possible.
2. Don't walk over or jump on the top of the tunnel.
3. Don't tunnel over top of another tunnel.

### **What You Must Always Do**

1. Wear the right clothes, bright colors or reflective are the best, boots, snow pants, coat, hat and gloves. Other items if you have: goggles, extra socks, scarf
2. Always have a "buddy" or many, the more the better.
3. Must stay away from the roads, water, parking lots, high wires, fences.
4. Tell an adult where you are going or better yet, bring them with!
5. Always be safe, no matter where the pile or tunnel is.
6. Most importantly, have fun!