

## A safer way to clear snow and ice from van trailers

Tom Berg • Senior Editor

**B**locks of snow and ice blowing off the roofs of trailers while they're moving down the highway are common sights in winter, irking motorists and sometimes causing damage and accidents. Although laws in several states require owners to clean off the roofs before the vehicles head for the road, that's easier decreed than done.

However, A. Duie Pyle, the old-line freight carrier operating in the Northeast, has found the answer in the "snow scraper" from Scraper Systems. The fleet has installed the equipment at 15 of its 17 terminals, and the other two should have them soon, says Randy Swart, the chief operating officer based at the company's headquarters in West Chester, Pa., outside of Philadelphia.

The devices are built not far west from there, in Lancaster, by Quintin Machinery. A video on the company's website, [www.scrapersystems.com](http://www.scrapersystems.com), shows how the plow-like device works on high-roof trailers or truck bodies.

The video says a driver can operate the scraper alone, but Swart says rigs can be cleaned off much faster, one after another, if the drivers just drive and a second man operates the blade. If a lot of snow has fallen, a third person might have to use a plow or wheel loader to keep the lot near the scraper clear.

"Prior to purchasing these scrapers, we 'de-snowed' the roofs by hand," Swart says. "Employees would climb up a ladder onto the



**The plow-like scraper removes snow as the trailer moves under the device. A rubber tip on the steel blade protects the roof. Pyle has 15 installed at its terminals in the Northeast, with two more scheduled.**

trailer roof and shovel the snow off. This posed a very real safety risk for our employees working 13 feet off the ground in slippery conditions.

Plus, newer, lighter-weight trailers with fewer ribs and translucent roofs are susceptible to damage when walked on.

Pyle bought the first scraper in 2004, well before the laws were passed requiring snow removal, because "it was the right thing to do," Swart explains. "It is dangerous to all motorists who share the road to have snow blowing off the roof of a trailer, creating a mini blizzard and

minimizing visibility of what lays ahead of them."

Light, fluffy snow is bad enough, but ice, formed when snow melts and refreezes, is more dangerous. It sometimes comes off in large sheets and can damage cars and injure motorists, and other drivers have to dodge pieces left on the pavement. The scrapers can remove much of the ice, as well. This also minimizes the company's legal liability.

The installed cost is around \$15,000 each, and there is minimal maintenance, other than lubricating moving parts. ■