

“Winter Weather – Get it Together”

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IDOT, ISP, Tollway Join Forces to Help Prepare Motorists for Snow and Ice

SPRINGFIELD – As snow and ice season bears down on Illinois, the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), Illinois State Police and the Illinois Tollway are teaming up to alert motorists to be prepared and to remember: “Winter Weather – Get it Together.”

By taking steps now to be ready to drive in wintry conditions, the traveling public can do its part to ensure a safe and successful winter driving season.

“With temperatures dropping and some of the state already experiencing a first blast of winter, drivers should be aware of what they can do to keep safety their No. 1 priority,” said Illinois Transportation Secretary Randy Blankenhorn. “That means buckling up, slowing down, increasing traveling distances, and preparing to stay home if the weather is bad. By remembering the basic winter driving skills, together we can make this winter the safest one ever on Illinois roads.”

Throughout the winter, especially during adverse weather, motorists should be building extra time into their schedules before heading out. As part of the “Winter Weather – Get it Together” campaign, all travelers are encouraged to follow a few simple rules and tips during the coming months:

? Always wear a seat belt. It’s the law in Illinois.

? Slow down. Slower speeds, slower acceleration, slower steering and slower braking all are required in winter driving conditions.

? Drop it and drive. Put down the handheld devices – it, too, is the law in Illinois.

? Don’t crowd the plow. A snow plow operator’s field of vision is restricted. You may see him, but he may not see you.

? Avoid using cruise control in snow and ice. 1044**15 State of Illinois Bruce Rauner, Governor Illinois Department of Transportation Randall S. Blankenhorn, Secretary ? Watch out for black ice on roads that appear clear but can be treacherous.

? Be especially careful approaching intersections, ramps, bridges and shady areas. All of them are prone to icing.

? Do not travel during bad weather unless absolutely necessary. If you do have to make a trip, check the forecast and make sure someone is aware of your travel route. Consider taking public transportation if it is an option.

? Prepare an emergency car care kit that contains jumper cables, flares or reflectors, windshield washer fluid, a small ice scraper, traction material, blankets, non-perishable food and a first aid kit.

? Carry a cell phone and a car charger in case of emergency.

? Follow Scott's Law. Slow down and move over for stopped emergency, construction and maintenance vehicles.

? For a list of suggested maintenance for your car, visit the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration winter driving website.

“Motorists should take every precaution to be prepared when traveling Illinois roadways this winter,” said Illinois State Police Col. Tad Williams. “Reduce speed and avoid unnecessary travel during winter storms. Always check the latest weather condition information on your radio or television before heading out. Keep a charged cell phone with you whenever possible and let someone know where you're going.”

At any time, motorists can check travel conditions by calling 1-800-452-IDOT (4368) or visiting gettingaroundillinois.com and clicking on the “Winter Road Conditions” icon.

Illinois Tollway information is available at 1-800-TOLL-FYI.

“The Illinois Tollway encourages drivers to take every precaution when winter conditions threaten to make roadways hazardous,” said Illinois Tollway Executive Director Greg Bedalov. “At the same time, we are prepared to act quickly to keep the Tollway system clear of snow and ice so our customers can enjoy safe and efficient travel regardless of winter weather conditions.”

For the upcoming winter, IDOT will have more than 1,700 trucks available for deployment to plow almost 16,560 miles of roads statewide, the equivalent of driving from Springfield to the tip of South America and back. Last year, IDOT spread more than 462,000 tons of salt statewide.

This winter, salt domes throughout the state are at capacity, with almost 460,000 tons on hand. IDOT is preparing to have access to more than 710,000 million additional tons, if necessary. The Illinois Tollway is prepared to mobilize its full fleet of 185 snowplows and has restocked its salt supplies so it has more than 84,000 tons available to keep its 286-mile system open and operating for the 1.5 million drivers who use the Tollway daily.

Please follow IDOT on Facebook and Twitter for updates on travel throughout the winter.