



Winter storm to impact driving conditions

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SPRINGFIELD — The Illinois Department of Transportation is warning the public that a major winter storm with the potential for double-digit snowfall totals in the central and southern regions of the state will begin late Friday afternoon and extend into Saturday, impacting travel heading into the weekend. To prepare, IDOT has been pretreating roads and bridges susceptible to icing, with plowing operations likely to begin later today and through the weekend.

“Before you head out into the storm, please ask yourself if this trip is necessary,” said Illinois Department of Transportation Deputy Secretary Omer Osman. “We are working hard to keep roads safe, but conditions will be challenging. If you do venture out, be prepared for increased travel times.”

The National Weather Service is predicting snow to begin falling in the eastern part of the state later today between 4 and 6 p.m. The primary area impacted is St. Louis Metro East, extending as far as Quincy and Effingham. Up to eight inches of snow are expected during the overnight hours, with additional accumulation Saturday of four to five inches.

If possible, avoid driving during the storm. The heavier the traffic, the more challenging it is for snow plows to clear roads. If you encounter a plow during your travels, please slow down, increase your driving distance and remain patient. Do not crowd the plow.

Tips if you have to travel:

- Take it slow, especially when approaching intersections, ramps, bridges and shady areas. All are prone to black ice, an invisible danger during some winter storms.
- Make sure your gas tank is full.
- Keep a cell phone, warm clothes, blankets, food, water, a first-aid kit, washer fluid and an ice scraper in your vehicle.

- Check the forecast and make sure someone is aware of your travel route and schedule.
- Carry a cellphone in case of emergency. Reminder: Using handheld phones while driving is illegal in Illinois, unless it is an emergency situation.
- Always wear a seat belt, whether you're sitting in the front seat or back seat. It's the law.

“If you must drive during hazardous winter weather conditions, please ensure you practice safe driving habits,” said Illinois State Police Director Leo P. Schmitz. “In order to prevent accidents from occurring, we want to remind all drivers to allow extra travel time to get to your destination, avoid unnecessary lane changes, reduce your speed, and increase your following distance on snow or ice-covered roadways. Also, please remember, if you approach an emergency vehicle, or any vehicle with their hazard lights activated, please ‘Give Them Distance’ and ‘Move Over.’”

For regular updates on statewide road conditions, visit GettingAroundIllinois.com. You can also follow IDOT on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).