

# Drivers, It's Time For "Winter Weather – Get It Together"

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**SPRINGFIELD** – With the first snowflakes of the season falling in recent days, the Illinois Department of Transportation, Illinois State Police, and Illinois Tollway are reminding the driving public that now is the ideal time for “Winter Weather – Get it Together.”

“At IDOT, we spend the entire year getting ready for the snow-and-ice season. Our top priority is making sure our roads are safe for the motoring public, but we do ask the motoring public to do its part as well and get prepared,” said Illinois Transportation Secretary Omer Osman. “Make sure your vehicle is in a safe, operating condition. Winter weather can change quickly so be prepared to reduce speeds and increase driving distances at all times. And please share the roads with our snow-and-ice teams – don’t crowd the plow.”

Throughout the coming months of cold weather and adverse conditions, motorists should practice basic winter driving skills and build extra time into their schedules. As part of the “Winter Weather – Get it Together” campaign, travelers are encouraged to follow these simple guidelines:

- Bookmark [GettingAroundIllinois.com](http://GettingAroundIllinois.com) to check travel conditions 24/7. This year’s winter road conditions map will feature more local, more precise reporting information.
- Wear a seat belt. It’s the law in Illinois. And it’s your best defense in a crash.
- Drop it and drive. Put down the mobile devices – it, too, is the law.
- Do not travel during bad weather unless absolutely necessary. If you do have to drive, check the forecast and make sure someone is aware of your route. Familiarize yourself with public transportation options.
- Slow down. Slower speeds, slower acceleration, slower steering, and slower braking are required throughout the winter.
- Don’t crowd the plow. A snowplow operator’s field of vision is restricted. You may see them, but they may not see you. Any plow that’s hit is one less resource available to clear the roads.
- Watch out for black ice. A road may appear clear but can be treacherous.
- Be especially careful when approaching intersections, ramps, bridges, and shaded areas. All are prone to icing.
- Prepare an emergency 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.
- Give them distance. Obey the Move Over Law by slowing down and changing lanes when approaching ANY stopped vehicle with flashing lights.

“Winter weather causes additional dangers to the men and women of the Illinois State Police on patrol to protect and serve all motorists,” said ISP Director Brendan F. Kelly. “In snowy and icy conditions, please refrain from driving unless it is essential. If you must get on the road, remember to adjust your driving to the weather and road conditions. Winter road conditions are unpredictable and a crash could happen at any moment. The fewer drivers on the road, the fewer crashes, and the safer everyone will be.

“If you approach an emergency vehicle with its lights activated or a disabled vehicle with flashing lights, please slow down and move over. Our goal is to ensure everyone makes it home safely.”

For the upcoming winter, IDOT will have almost 1,800 trucks available for deployment to plow nearly 16,000 miles of roads statewide, the equivalent of driving from New York to Los Angeles and back almost three times. Last year, IDOT spread more than

522,000 tons of salt statewide. This winter, salt domes throughout the state are close to capacity, with more than 445,000 tons on hand, almost twice the weight of the Willis Tower.

Two plows making their debut in the IDOT fleet this winter are Orange Crush and Scoopy Do – the winning entries from the inaugural “Name the Snowplow” contest held at the Illinois State Fair. The names were among 700 entries submitted by visitors to the IDOT tent, with the finalists chosen through a statewide employee contest. The plows will be used primarily in IDOT’s District 6, which encompasses Adams, Brown, Cass, Christian, Hancock, Logan, Macoupin, Mason, Menard, Montgomery, Morgan, Pike, Sangamon, Schuyler, and Scott counties.

The Illinois Tollway mobilizes a fleet of 196 snowplows during winter storms and this year has stockpiled 88,000 tons of salt to keep its 294-mile system of five roadways clear and safe for its 1.6 million daily drivers. Information on tollway road conditions is available at [www.illinoistollway.com](http://www.illinoistollway.com).

“Our highest priority is safety and to protect our customers this winter we will rapidly deploy full crews during severe weather to keep our roads clear and our drivers safe,” said Illinois Tollway Executive Director José Alvarez. “But we can’t do it alone. We are asking our customers to help us by slowing down and increasing the distance from other vehicles, particularly plows and other emergency vehicles so they have the room they need to safely do their work. Drivers whose cars become disabled should stay with their vehicles and dial \*999 for assistance, rather than trying to go for help themselves.”