

# Storms, Heavy Snow, Bitter Cold Across State Will Make Travel Hazardous

by Dan Brannan, Content Director  
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**SPRINGFIELD** – The Illinois Department of Transportation is warning the public the weather throughout the weekend will create hazardous conditions across the state and urging drivers to strongly consider postponing any unnecessary travel. Throughout Illinois, periods of snow, rain and bitter cold should be anticipated, creating extremely slick conditions and poor visibility.

“IDOT crews will be out on the roads but conditions could still be extremely hazardous, so we encourage motorists to ask themselves if they really need to make the trip,” said Illinois Transportation Secretary Omer Osman. “If you do have to travel, remember that the bitter cold and wind reduces the effectiveness of the materials we use to treat snow and ice. There will be lengthy travel times so make sure to prepare your vehicle in the event you are stranded.”

The National Weather Service forecast includes a strong storm system with a wide range of weather New Year’s Day through New Year’s night. Rain and several inches of snow are expected across Illinois, and a transition zone will include a wintry mix with minor ice accumulations possible. This will be most prevalent between Interstate 80 and I-70 on Saturday.

Gusty north winds Saturday afternoon will create blowing and drifting snow on east-west roads, and the system may trigger strong to severe storms south of I-64 this evening through Saturday. Damaging winds and a few tornadoes will be possible. Heavy rainfall Friday night through Saturday could produce minor flooding of roads in low lying and poor drainage areas.

The coldest air of the season will occur with wind chills falling between zero to -20F west of the I-55 corridor Sunday morning, and north of I-72 corridor Monday morning, which will cause roads to freeze.

Statewide, IDOT has available more than 1,800 trucks and equipment to treat roads and respond to weather emergencies. If you encounter a plow or any maintenance vehicle during your travels, please slow down, increase your driving distance and remain patient.

### **If you must travel:**

- Take it slow, especially when approaching intersections, ramps, bridges and shaded areas that are prone to icing.
- 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 route and schedule.
- Carry a cellphone and dial \*999 in the Chicago area for assistance in case of emergency.
- Reminder: Using handheld phones while driving is illegal in Illinois, unless it is an emergency situation.
- If you are involved in a crash or break down, remain inside your vehicle, which is your safest form of shelter. Exiting your vehicle into live traffic can have fatal consequences.

- Always wear a seat belt, whether you're sitting in the front seat or back seat. It's the law.

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