

Weather Service issues advisory; motorists urged to take time on roads

by Dan Brannan, Content Director

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The National Weather Service in St. Louis has issued a winter-weather advisory in effect from 6 tonight to noon on Saturday. The Illinois State Police recommends motorists avoid traveling if possible, or slow down.

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The weather advisory is calling for a combination of snow, sleet and ice. A total of 1 to 3 inches of snow and sleet are predicted. The National Weather Service said precipitation will start as snow but transition into sleet and then freezing rain from west to east late this afternoon and into the evening. Some thunder is also possible in the evening for the areas roughly south of the Missouri River in Missouri and U.S. 50 in Illinois, the advisory said.

Weather conditions have been good for most of the winter, but in the last week temperatures have dipped down close to zero in the region.

The winter precipitation will cause hazardous travel conditions, especially on bridges and overpasses and untreated roads. Parking lots and sidewalks will become slippery as well, the Weather Service said.

Illinois District 18 State Police Lt. Louis Kink said if people have to venture out, they should allow plenty of time and not get in a hurry to their destination.

"Being in too big of a hurry is always the biggest problem," he said of ice events. "Motorists should go slow and allow plenty of distance between vehicles in front of them and also carry emergency kits, including blankets, candles, bottled water and make sure you have a cell phone and the cell phone is charged or you have a charger."

The state trooper also recommended that people fill up their gas tank before they depart because if they are stuck on the road, they might need the gas to retain heat in the vehicle.

IDOT District 11 spokesperson Joe Monroe said 150 trucks are ready to roll throughout his region to remove snow and ice.

"I already have trucks on the pavement," he said. "If not an essential trip, people should delay it. Depending on the trip, if someone feels it necessary to go out, we will do our best to keep every road open and passable. Everyone needs to understand stopping distance will be greatly shorter than a normal day. Motorists need to leave plenty of space in between the vehicle they control and vehicles out there."

Monroe stressed that motorists should give snow plows plenty of room.

"We have been seeing some not giving people with plows enough room," he said. In ice, it is even more risky trying to take any liberty around a snow plow. Leave plenty of space and leave plenty of time."