



‘Winter Weather – Get it Together,’ Plan Ahead for Snow and Ice

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November 19 2023 7:35 AM



SPRINGFIELD– The calendar says November, so snow and ice probably aren’t far away – which is why the Illinois Department of Transportation, Illinois State Police and Illinois Tollway are reminding the public that it’s time for “Winter Weather – Get it Together.”

“At IDOT, preparing for winter is a year-long endeavor, but we need the public’s help to keep you and your loved ones safe during the coming weeks and months,” **said Illinois Transportation Secretary Omer Osman**. “The team at IDOT is ready to take on snow and ice with your cooperation. Plan ahead. Reduce speeds. Increase stopping distances between vehicles. Anticipate conditions will change quickly at any time. Keep your eyes on the road. And if you are out during snow removal operations, do not crowd the plow.”

Now is a crucial time to begin practicing basic winter driving skills and preparing for even routine trips to take longer to complete, though temperatures are above freezing during the day and roads appear clear. As part of the “Winter Weather – Get it Together” campaign, travelers are encouraged to follow these simple guidelines:

- Bookmark GettingAroundIllinois.com to check travel conditions 24/7 before heading out.
- 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 and ridesharing options.
- Give yourself plenty of extra time. Slow down and increase the distance between other vehicles. Give yourself extra time.
- 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 that are prone to icing and can become extremely slick.
- Don’t crowd the plow. You might see them, but they might not see you. Also, road conditions are much better behind than in front of the plow. Any plow that’s hit is one less resource available to clear the roads.
- Prepare an emergency kit with jumper cables, flares or reflectors, windshield washer fluid, an ice scraper, traction material, blankets, non-perishable food and a first-aid kit.
- Always 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. This, too, is the law.
- Give them distance. Obey the Move Over law by slowing down and changing lanes when approaching ANY stopped vehicle.
- Carry a cell phone and a car charger in case of emergency.
- For more winter driving tips, check out this short IDOT [video](#).

“Winter weather will be here soon and navigating our roadways will take a little more time and patience,” said **ISP Director Brendan F. Kelly**. “Our troopers risk their lives on the side of the road helping motorists who have crashed or become stranded because

of the snow and ice. Do your part to help make sure they stay safe and go home at the end of their shift. Remember to move over and slow down as you approach emergency vehicles.”

The public is advised that snow-and-ice response times could be impacted due to an industry-wide shortage of workers with a commercial driver’s license, resulting in challenges in filling plow driver positions. While hiring at IDOT continues for both temporary and permanent positions, staffing levels for the winter response team are down approximately 10-15% since the start of the pandemic. For information on job postings throughout the state, visit <https://illinois.jobs2web.com>.

For the upcoming winter, IDOT will have more than 1,800 trucks available for deployment to plow more than 17,000 centerline miles of roads statewide, the equivalent of driving back and forth between New York City and Los Angeles three times. Last winter, IDOT crews spread more than 318,600 tons of salt statewide. This winter, salt domes are at capacity, with more than 558,190 tons on hand, a little more than twice the weight of Willis Tower.

“Our highest priority this winter is protecting our customers by rapidly deploying our roadway workers and fleet of snowplows whenever severe weather strikes to keep our roads clear of snow and ice,” said **Illinois Tollway Executive Director Cassaundra Rouse**. “We’ll do whatever it takes this winter to keep our customers safe, but we’re asking drivers to help us protect them by slowing down during storms and increasing their distance from other vehicles, especially snowplows and emergency responders. If they become stranded along the road, drivers should dial *999 for assistance and remain with their vehicles because even during severe weather, help is only a phone call away.”

During winter storms, the Illinois Tollway mobilizes a fleet of 196 snowplows to clear its 294 miles of roads and this year has stockpiled more than 110,000 tons of salt to help ensure that even during snowy winter weather its 1.5 million daily drivers can safely reach their destinations.