



State of Illinois
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Illinois Department of Transportation
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With snow-and-ice season approaching, public encouraged: “Winter Weather – Get it Together”

SPRINGFIELD – As snow-and-ice season fast approaches, the Illinois Department of Transportation and Illinois State Police are reminding the driving public that it’s time for “Winter Weather – Get it Together.” Because of the continuing threat of COVID-19, planning and preparation, as well as patience and understanding, will be needed more than ever from drivers this winter.

“Our snow-and-ice response teams have prepared throughout the year to make this upcoming winter driving season as safe as possible. Whenever you see them doing their jobs, please slow down and give them room to work,” said Acting Illinois Transportation Secretary Omer Osman. “This year, we need the public to always be planning ahead and truly asking themselves before heading out if snow and ice are in the forecast: Is this trip really necessary?”

“Like everyone else, we feel the effects of COVID-19 at IDOT. Although we are taking every precaution we can to keep employees safe, we are prepared for the possibility our staffing levels this winter will be impacted by the coronavirus.”

Since the start of the pandemic, IDOT has adopted several measures to help keep frontline personnel safe, including frequent cleaning and disinfecting of facilities and equipment. Employees responsible for snow-and-ice removal are instructed to wear masks, socially distance and avoid congregating in common areas at all times. Contingency plans will be in place to provide coverage and clear roads as quickly as possible if workers need to be quarantined, but response times could be affected.

At all times, motorists should be mindful of winter driving skills and build extra time into their schedules in the months ahead. 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.
- Wear a seat belt. It’s the law in Illinois. And it’s your best defense if you are involved in a crash.
- Drop it and drive. Put down the 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 must be pulled out of service, resulting in 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. For emergency assistance in the Chicago area, call *999.
- Give them distance. Obey the Move Over Law by slowing down and changing lanes when approaching ANY stopped vehicle with flashing lights.
- For more winter driving tips, check out this short IDOT [video](#).

For the upcoming winter, IDOT will have more than 1,800 trucks available for deployment to plow almost 16,000 miles of roads statewide, the equivalent of driving from New York to Los Angeles and back almost six times. Last year, IDOT spread more than 427,000 tons of salt statewide. This winter, salt domes throughout the state are close to capacity, with more than 466,000 tons on hand, twice the weight of the Willis Tower.

“The men and women of the Illinois State Police will face additional dangers on patrol during winter weather months while protecting and serving all motorists,” said ISP Director Brendan F. Kelly. “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, 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.”

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