



WINTER WEATHER
GET IT TOGETHER



State of Illinois
JB Pritzker, Governor

Illinois Department of Transportation
Omer Osman, Acting Secretary

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Feb. 15, 2021

CONTACT:

Paul Wappel (IDOT) 217.685.0082
Guy Tridgell (IDOT) 312.343.1731
ISP.PIO.Personnel@illinois.gov 217.524.2500

Heavy snow, bitter cold to make travel hazardous

Major winter storm blanketing Illinois, IDOT, ISP urge public to avoid driving

SPRINGFIELD – The Illinois Department of Transportation and Illinois State Police are warning the public that a major winter storm will create hazardous conditions across the state, urging drivers to strongly consider postponing any unnecessary travel. Throughout Illinois, intense periods of heavy snow and continued bitter cold should be anticipated, creating extremely slick conditions and poor visibility.

“As always, our team at IDOT will be out on the roads around the clock, but if you can stay indoors, please do, especially during the overnight hours,” said Acting Illinois Transportation Secretary Omer Osman. “Conditions at times could be treacherous, with the cold and wind reducing the effectiveness of the materials we use to treat snow and ice. Expect extremely long travel times and always prepare your vehicle in the event you are stranded.”

The National Weather Service has issued a storm warning for today and Tuesday, predicting the heaviest snow to fall late this afternoon and evening. Between 6 to 12 inches are expected east of Interstate 57, with some of the heaviest amounts in Chicago, the Metro East and far southern Illinois. Along the entire Interstate 55 corridor, 5 to 8 inches are possible. In northwest Illinois, 1 to 2 inches are anticipated. Blowing and drifting snow throughout the state are likely due to the amounts and fluffiness of the snow combined with high winds.

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, we ask that you allow additional time to reach your destination and ensure your vehicle is in a safe operating condition,” said ISP Director Brandon Kelly. “Please obey all traffic laws and posted speed limits. Remember, speed limits are set for clear conditions. Only

drive the speed limit if it is safe to do so. And please watch out for emergency responders and highway maintainers who are doing their best to keep the roadways safe.”

Other tips 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. You also can follow IDOT on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

###