

State of Illinois
JB Pritzker, Governor

Illinois Department of Transportation
Gia Biagi, Secretary

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Winter Weather — Get it Together: Snow-and-ice season is upon us

IDOT, Tollway and ISP prepped and ready to go

SPRINGFIELD — With temperatures steadily dropping, overnight frost becoming common and snow starting to creep into the forecast, the public is reminded that it's time for "Winter Weather — Get it Together." After spending the last several months prepping for whatever the season has in store, the Illinois Department of Transportation, Illinois State Police and Illinois Tollway are asking the public to dust off their winter driving skills and get ready for snow-and-ice season.

"We spend the entire year preparing for winter at IDOT, bringing on extra help, getting equipment ready to go and stockpiling materials to tackle snow and ice," said **Illinois Transportation Secretary Gia Biagi.** "We need the public's help as well. Now is the perfect time to get familiar with winter driving again and make sure you and your vehicle are ready for snow and freezing temperatures."

Over the next several months, start building extra time in your schedule before heading out and anticipate even routine trips to take longer, though temperatures are above freezing during the day and roads appear clear. As part of the "Winter Weather — Get it Together" campaign, the public is encouraged to follow these guidelines:

- Bookmark IDOT's GettingAroundIllinois.com to check road conditions 24/7 before heading out. Get in the habit of monitoring weather forecasts if traveling.
- Give yourself plenty of extra time for trips. Slow down and increase the distance between vehicles.
- 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. Have a cellphone charger in your vehicle at all times.
- Check your battery, charging system and belts for repairs or replacements. Inspect your tires for wear and pressure. Make sure all the lights on your vehicle are in working order.
- Watch out for black ice and slippery conditions, even if there is no snow on the ground. A road may appear clear but can be treacherous with minimal amounts of moisture.
- Be especially careful when approaching intersections, ramps, bridges and shaded areas that are prone to icing and can become extremely slick.
- 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 in your community.
- Don't crowd the plows and other equipment treating roads. You might see plow drivers, but their vantage point might not allow them to see you. Also, road conditions are much better behind the plow than in front of it. Any plow that's hit is one less resource available to clear the roads.
- 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 phone, This, too, is the law.
- Give them distance. Obey the Move Over law by slowing down and changing lanes when approaching ANY stopped vehicle.
- Follow IDOT on Facebook and X to see how the agency is responding to winter weather throughout the state.
- For more winter driving tips, check out this short IDOT video.

"Every winter, ISP troopers handle hundreds of crashes, most times because people are driving too fast for the weather conditions — ice, snow, freezing rain, arctic winds," **said ISP Director Brendan F. Kelly.** "When you see snow, go slow, so you and our troopers can make it home safely."

For the upcoming winter, IDOT will have nearly 1,900 trucks available for deployment to plow more than 45,000 lane miles of roads statewide, the equivalent of driving back and forth between New York City and Los Angeles eight times. Last winter, IDOT crews spread more than 394,000 tons of salt statewide. This winter, salt domes are at capacity, with more than 450,000 tons on hand, almost twice the weight of Willis Tower.

To increase staffing for winter operations, hiring at IDOT continues for both temporary and permanent positions. For information on job postings throughout the state, visit https://illinois.jobs2web.com/ or IDOT's Employment page and enter "snow removal operator." "Our crews work around the clock during winter storms to keep the Illinois Tollway system clear and safe, but we need drivers to do their part, too, by slowing down, allowing extra travel time and giving snowplows plenty of room to work," said **Illinois Tollway Executive Director Cassaundra Rouse**. "And if you become stranded on the Tollway at any time, remember to stay in your vehicle, call *999 for assistance and wait for help to arrive. By working together and making safe choices, we can help everyone reach their destinations safely this winter."

The Illinois Tollway mobilizes a fleet of more than 220 snowplows and uses a combination of rock salt, salt brine and calcium chloride to treat roads and respond to changing winter weather conditions across its system, helping keep roads clear and safe for the more than 1.7 million drivers who rely on the Tollway daily. More than 200 personnel support winter operations from 12 maintenance garages across the nearly 300-mile Tollway system.

Before traveling on the Illinois Tollway this winter, drivers should check Tollway Trip Tweets to obtain real-time roadway incident information and pavement conditions via @94_294_Tollway, @I_90_Tollway, @I_88_Tollway, @I_355_Tollway and @IL_390_Tollway.

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