

# Snow and ice mean it's time for "Winter Weather – Get it Together"

## Annual safety campaign urges drivers to prepare now for Old Man Winter

SPRINGFIELD – With snow and ice touching much of the state this week, 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." Because of the nationwide shortage of commercial vehicle drivers impacting staffing levels on winter operations teams throughout Illinois and the Midwest, planning and preparation, as well as patience and understanding, will be needed more than ever from motorists this winter.

"Keeping roads clear and safe takes a great deal of work before, during and after major winter weather events. It's something we prepare for the entire year," said Illinois Transportation Secretary Omer Osman. "The dedicated men and women at IDOT who battle the wintry elements are ready at all times. However, we can't do it alone. It is imperative that you do your part as well. Be prepared to reduce speeds, stay patient and increase driving distance between vehicles at all times. And please share the roads – don't crowd the plow."

In the coming months, motorists should practice basic winter driving skills and build extra time into their schedules, even when roads appear to be clear. As part of the "Winter Weather – Get it Together" campaign, travelers are encouraged to follow these simple guidelines:

- Bookmark [GettingAroundIllinois.com](http://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.
- 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 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.
- Always wear a seat belt. It's the law in Illinois. And it's your best defense in a crash.



check out this short IDOT video.

"Winter weather can change driving conditions quickly, especially when temperatures fall rapidly, turning even a dusting of snow into a sheet of ice," said ISP Director Brendan F. Kelly. "When you see snow, drive slow. Make sure to give yourself extra time to get where you're going, slow down, and keep more distance between you and other drivers."

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% to 15% from the same time a year ago. For information on job postings throughout the state, visit <https://illinois.jobs2web.com>.

For the upcoming winter, IDOT will have over 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 to Los Angeles three times. Last winter, IDOT

crews spread more than 437,100 tons of salt statewide. This winter, salt domes throughout the state are close to capacity, with more than 460,350 tons on hand, a little more than twice the weight of the Willis Tower.

The Illinois Tollway deploys a fleet of 196 snowplows during winter storms to clear its 294 miles of roads and has stockpiled 89,000 tons of salt to help ensure its 1.5 million daily drivers can safely reach their destinations even during stormy winter weather.

"Keeping our customers safe and our roads clear is our top priority this winter, and we will accomplish this critically important job by quickly mobilizing our roadway workers and deploying our full fleet of snowplows whenever severe weather strikes," said Illinois Tollway Executive Director Cassandra Rouse. "We're urging our customers to help us achieve this goal by slowing down during storms and increasing their distance from other vehicles, especially emergency vehicles and snowplows, which need extra room to safely clear the roads. We're also reminding drivers that even during winter storms help is only a phone call away, so if their cars become disabled, they should dial \*999 for assistance and remain with their vehicles instead of trying to go for help themselves."

Illinois Tollway road condition information is available at [www.illinoistollway.com](http://www.illinoistollway.com).

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