

IDOT Warns Motorists about Dangerous Road Conditions on Majority of State Routes

Snow and Ice Covered Roads Statewide; Blowing and Drifting Snow Continues

CHICAGO – The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) announced this morning that Winter Storm Ion has impacted the majority of the state with snow, and in some areas, freezing rain. IDOT has thousands of winter weather crews deployed statewide to address the winter weather on state routes, but motorists are urged to only travel if necessary as conditions worsen and snow continues to fall throughout the state. Currently, the majority of Illinois roads are snow and ice covered.

The National Weather Service forecasts that a winter storm will move through central and southeast Illinois today. Snow is expected to increase in coverage and intensity this morning with a mix of rain south of I-70 in the metro east area. The heaviest snow is expected southeast of the Taylorville to Champaign line. After the storm moves through, historically cold temperatures are expected throughout Illinois with temperatures to fall to 15 below zero and wind chills ranging from 35 to 45 below zero through Tuesday.

“Blowing and drifting snow continues to be a major challenge across Illinois,” said Illinois Transportation Secretary Ann L. Schneider. “Winter Storm Ion has impacted 90 percent of the state. Thousands of IDOT winter weather crews are on the job statewide clearing snow covered roads and spreading salt to help ensure roads are clear and passable. Motorists should continue to use extreme caution, only travel if necessary, take it slow, buckle up and avoid distractions when behind the wheel.”

Currently, IDOT has 1,755 trucks assigned to snow duty across the state, and nearly 3,700 full- and part-time employees throughout the state available to help ensure roads are clear and passable. IDOT will continue to monitor the latest storm system as it moves into Illinois.

Drivers are reminded to exercise caution when snow and ice affect roadways, and IDOT advises travel only when absolutely necessary during winter storms or when temperatures are extremely low. During the severely cold weather expected, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security advises that Illinois residents limit exposure to cold temperatures, dress in layers, check in on others who may need additional assistance, keep vehicles in good repair, and bring pets indoors. For a list of warming centers in Illinois, visit <http://www2.illinois.gov/KeepWarm/Pages/warmingcenter.aspx>.

Other safety tips to remember:

- Don't crowd the plow – a snow plow operator's field of vision is restricted. You may see them, but they may not see you.
- Allow extra time for travel during the winter months.
- Watch out for black ice on roads that appear clear but can be treacherous. Take it slow when approaching intersections, off-ramps, bridges and shady areas - all are prone to black ice, which is often invisible.
- Always keep your gas tank at least two-thirds full to help prevent the vehicle's fuel line from freezing.
- Do not travel during bad weather unless absolutely necessary - if you do have to make a trip, check the forecast and make sure someone is aware of your travel route.
- Always carry an emergency car care 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 dial *999 for roadway assistance.

- Always wear a safety belt.
- Motorists are urged to check travel conditions before any trip. You can get road condition information by calling 1-800-452-IDOT (4368), Illinois Tollway information by calling 1-800-TOLL-FYI or online at www.gettingaroundillinois.com and click on the “winter road conditions” icon.