

Illinois Road Conditions Improve Statewide; Motorists Still Advised to Take it Slow

Snow, Ice, Freezing Rain Cause Slick and Dangerous Travel

CHICAGO – The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) announced today that the condition of roads and bridges are improving in some areas, but motorists are still advised to use extreme caution when travelling in Illinois. Currently, the majority of state routes have ice and snow patches, with areas from Effingham to Champaign and Jacksonville to Springfield snow and ice covered.

Roads are slick and dangerous in impacted areas, and motorists should only travel if absolutely necessary.

IDOT has more than 860 trucks and more than 1,100 employees assigned to impacted areas to remove snow and ice from state routes to help ensure the safety of the motoring public. Due to current weather conditions, IDOT encourages motorists who must travel to check the latest winter road conditions and road closures at www.gettingaroundillinois.com. Currently, all roads are open. However, the Cave in Rock, Kampsville and Brussels Ferries are closed due to ice. IDOT will continue to monitor the winter weather statewide and respond accordingly.

“IDOT winter weather crews are seeing road conditions improve, but are still out in full force clearing snow and ice from impacted areas,” said Illinois Transportation Secretary Ann L. Schneider. “Temperatures are expected to drop, which will create very slick and dangerous road conditions. Motorists are advised to only travel if absolutely necessary, to take it slow, give plow drivers plenty of room to work, buckle up and avoid distractions when behind the wheel.”

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>. Those traveling by Amtrak trains are encouraged to call 800-USA-RAIL or visit Amtrak.com/alerts for Service Alerts and Passenger Notices.

Safety tips to remember:

- Allow extra time for travel during the winter months.
- 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.
- Be aware that black ice can form on roads that appear clear and the unseen ice 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 and schedule.
- 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 few extra blankets in your car, and perhaps an extra coat to ensure protection in case of a breakdown.
- Carry a cell phone and dial *999 for roadway assistance in case of emergency (but remember using handheld phones while driving is illegal if it is not an emergency situation).
- Always wear a seat belt, front seat or back – it's the law.
- Check travel and road conditions routinely 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.