State of Illinois
Pat Quinn, Governor

Illinois Department of Transportation
Ann L. Schneider, Secretary

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IDOT, Law Enforcement and Illinois Tollway Launch "Ice and Snow - Take It Slow" Campaign

Agencies Announce Winter Preparations and Urge Motorists to Slow Down, Buckle Up, Drive Sober, and Don't Text and Drive

CHICAGO - Illinois transportation and law enforcement officials today stressed safety and urged motorists to prepare for unfavorable driving conditions this winter season. The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), Illinois Tollway and the Illinois State Police (ISP) have partnered to roll out the state's frontline winter crews and ensure that emergency equipment is ready for the upcoming snow and ice season.

"IDOT is fully prepared for the upcoming winter season with sufficient snow removal supplies and staff, and will continue to collaborate with our law enforcement and transportation partners to make state roadways as clear and safe as possible," Illinois Transportation Secretary Ann L. Schneider said. "We strongly encourage all motorists to be ready for harsh weather conditions this year, and to continue to drive defensively, slow down, never drive while distracted or impaired, and always buckle up. Traveler safety remains our top priority at IDOT."

During the 2012-13 winter season, more than 3,680 employees and 1,730 pieces of equipment will be available for deployment by IDOT to keep state routes clear and passable. Last year, during an unusually mild 2011-12 winter, the agency spent $37 million on snow removal and spread 236,600 tons of salt. For many years, ISP, Tollway and IDOT have worked together to urge motorists to drive defensively and safely in winter weather.

"Every year, motorists face weather conditions that can have a devastating impact on driving conditions and passenger safety. Whether it's a semi-truck or a motor vehicle, motorists should drive with extra caution to ensure that accidents are avoided and roads are safe," said Illinois State Police Director Hiram Grau. "Reducing your speed, allowing for extra travel time, increasing distances between vehicles, and avoiding unnecessary lane changes are just a few simple precautions drivers can take to make commutes safer."

The Illinois Tollway has readied 182 plow trucks and other equipment to combat snow and ice storms this winter across the 286-mile Tollway system in Northern Illinois. In addition, the Tollway has about 84,000 tons of salt on hand along with other supplies, including liquid calcium chloride and roadway abrasives to keep roadways clear for its 1.4 million daily drivers.

"The Illinois Tollway is prepared for whatever this winter brings our way, and we want our customers to get ready too," said Illinois Tollway Executive Director Kristi Lafleur. "In addition to prepping their vehicles for winter, drivers need to be prepared to focus on the road by putting their cell phones aside when driving in winter conditions, and more important, remember that it is always illegal to text while driving."

Other safety tips include:

- 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.
- 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.
- 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.

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