

NEWS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 18, 2013

Contact: Joelle McGinnis

630-241-6800 ext. 2380 jmcginnis@getipass.com

ILLINOIS TOLLWAY PREPARES TO ACTIVATE ZERO WEATHER ROAD PATROLS TO PROVIDE HELP ALONG THE WAY SATURDAY NIGHT INTO MONDAY

Zero Weather Road Patrols augment H.E.L.P. trucks and State Police District 15

DOWNERS GROVE, IL – The Illinois Tollway will launch its Zero Weather Road Patrols to assist drivers stranded in their cars during the first deep freeze of January. The Zero Weather Road Patrols are implemented when temperatures and/or wind chills drop below zero. The Tollway anticipates activating Zero Patrols overnight, Saturday, January 19, and into the day Monday, January 21, until the temperature and/or wind chill rises above zero.

The 24-hour service dedicates hourly patrols in search of motorists stranded in disabled vehicles or in response to calls that come in to *999 motorist assistance, Illinois Tollway dispatch or Illinois State Police District 15.

"Help is a phone call away for drivers who need assistance on the Illinois Tollway when it's dangerously cold outside," said Illinois Tollway Executive Director Kristi Lafleur. "The Zero Weather Road Patrols offer reassurance to drivers who may find themselves stranded on the roadway."

While Tollway Highway Emergency Lane Patrol (H.E.L.P.) trucks run from 4 a.m. to 8 p.m., Monday through Friday, the Zero Weather Road Patrols work throughout the day and night, including weekends. Cars or trucks with empty fuel tanks, flat tires, batteries needing a boost, or overheated radiators are just some of the most frequent problems reported among the motorists needing help.

There are a minimum of 11 Zero Weather Road Patrols, at least one from each maintenance garage section. While on patrol, these vehicles also retrieve debris reported in lanes and can assist Illinois State Police District 15 as needed. Zero Weather Road Patrols augment H.E.L.P. trucks and State Police patrols and ensure all segments of the Tollway system are monitored, especially during the overnight hours.

The Zero Weather Road Patrols consist of crew cab trucks equipped with arrow boards for directing traffic around accidents or stranded vehicles and enough room to accommodate up to five passengers if motorists need to be transported to a Tollway maintenance garage, toll plaza or Tollway oasis while service is obtained.

During dangerously cold weather, the Illinois Tollway also encourages customers to visit one of the seven oases located along the Tollway system to warm up, check their vehicles or simply take a break. The oases provide a variety of food, beverage and retail offerings, as well as Mobil fuel stations. On the Tri-State Tollway (I-94/I-294/I-80), there are four oases: Lake Forest, O'Hare, Hinsdale and Chicago Southland Lincoln in South Holland. There are two oases on the Jane Addams Memorial Tollway (I-90) in Belvidere and Des Plaines, and one on the Reagan Memorial Tollway (I-88) in DeKalb.

Other Tollway Services

The Illinois Tollway's Traffic and Incident Management System (TIMS) provides real-time travel times and roadway conditions via the Illinois Tollway's website, www.illinoistollway.com, and on over-the-road electronic message signs throughout the Tollway. Drivers can call *999 from their cell phone to request assistance or report stranded vehicles. The *999 service is funded by the Illinois Tollway and the Illinois Department of Transportation.

In addition, the Tollway operates a toll-free telephone line to keep customers up to date about weather conditions on its roadways. Customers can call 1-800-TOLL-FYI (1-800-865-5394) to get recorded information that is updated every two hours or as conditions require during winter storms.

Drivers also can sign up for Tollway Tweets at www.twitter.com or from the Tollway's website at www.illinoistollway.com to receive real-time information about roadway incidents, including the type of incident, location and impact on traffic to assist drivers in planning their trips. Tweeters can follow all four Tollway Trips or just the roadways that interest them. The four are Tollway Trip 90, Tollway Trip 94/294, Tollway Trip 88 and Tollway Trip 355.

Winter Weather Travel Tips

The Tollway offers the following travel tips to keep safe during extreme temperatures:

- Stranded motorists should turn on their emergency lights and remain in their vehicles until help arrives.
- Cell phone users should call *999 motorist assistance for roadway assistance or to report other motorists pulled over on the side of the road.
- Before calling, motorists should try to note the roadway and direction of travel and nearest milepost or crossroad so the stranded motorist can be quickly located.

About the Illinois Tollway

The Illinois Tollway is a user-fee system that receives no state or federal funds for maintenance and operations. The agency maintains and operates 286 miles of interstate tollways in 12 counties in Northern Illinois, including the Reagan Memorial Tollway (I-88), the Veterans Memorial Tollway (I-355), the Jane Addams Memorial Tollway (I-90) and the Tri-State Tollway (I-94/I-294/I-80).