



ILLINOIS TOLLWAY NEWS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
December 24, 2020

ILLINOIS TOLLWAY LAUNCHES ZERO WEATHER ROAD PATROLS OVER CHRISTMAS HOLIDAY TO ASSIST CUSTOMERS DURING DANGEROUS COLD AND WINDCHILLS

Special patrols bolster aid provided by H.E.L.P. trucks and Illinois State Police

DOWNERS GROVE, IL – The Illinois Tollway is launching around-the-clock Zero Weather Road Patrols to more quickly assist customers traveling over the Christmas holiday who become stranded on the Tollway system during the cold weather and dangerous wind chills forecast to continue into the weekend.

The Illinois Tollway typically operates Zero Weather Road Patrols whenever temperatures or sustained wind chills fall below zero degrees. The 24-hour patrols search for drivers stranded in disabled vehicles and respond to calls that come in to *999 motorist assistance, Illinois Tollway dispatch or Illinois State Police District 15.

“With these dangerously cold windchills, we are taking additional steps to protect customers who are traveling during the Christmas holiday by putting extra crews on the road to more quickly locate and assist any drivers stranded along our roadways,” said Illinois Tollway Executive Director José Alvarez. “We will do everything we can during these extreme conditions to make sure our customers safely reach their destinations. Any driver who becomes stranded along our roads should dial *999 for assistance and remain in their vehicle until help arrives.”

While the Illinois Tollway’s Highway Emergency Lane Patrol (H.E.L.P.) trucks sponsored by State Farm run from 4 a.m. to 8 p.m., Monday through Friday, a minimum of 12 Zero Weather Road Patrols provide additional coverage throughout the day and night, including weekends to augment H.E.L.P. trucks and Illinois State Police patrols.

The Zero Weather Road Patrols consist of crew cab trucks equipped with arrow boards for directing traffic around accidents or stranded vehicles and accommodate passengers if motorists need to be transported to a Tollway maintenance garage, toll plaza or Tollway oasis while service is obtained. As a precaution against the spread of COVID-19, glass partitions have been installed between the front and rear seats in motorist aid trucks and H.E.L.P. trucks to protect customers and Tollway workers operating the vehicles. Those vehicles also carry masks and hand sanitizer as additional precautions against COVID-19.

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 drivers needing help.

The Illinois Tollway reminds motorists the state’s “Move Over Law” **requires** motorists to change lanes or to slow down and proceed with caution when passing any vehicle on the side of the road with hazard lights activated. Drivers may visit <https://www.illinoistollway.com/roadway-safety> for more information on *Give Them Distance, Drop it and Drive*, and other Tollway safety campaigns aimed at making the road safer for everyone.

Winter Weather Travel Tips

The Tollway offers the following travel tips to keep safe during dangerously cold weather:

- **Be sure your cell phone is fully charged** before heading out.
- **Be sure tires are properly inflated** during cold weather. Tires lose a pound of pressure for every 10 degrees the temperature drops.
- **Keep your gas tank at least half full** to avoid gas line freeze-up and ensure that you have extra to account for additional driving time if the weather is unfavorable.
- **Keep a cold weather safety kit** in your car that includes gloves, boots, blankets, road flares, water and a flashlight with fresh batteries.
- 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 and note the roadway and direction of travel and nearest milepost or crossroad.

The Illinois Tollway also reminds customers that [oases located along the Tollway system](#) serve as warming centers and also provide drivers an opportunity to check their vehicles or simply take a break. All of the oases provide 7-Eleven stores and fuel stations, and most also provide a variety of food and beverage offerings. 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 is an oasis on the Reagan Memorial Tollway (I-88) in DeKalb and on the Jane Addams Memorial Tollway (I-90) in Belvidere.

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 294 miles of roadways 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), the Tri-State Tollway (I-94/I-294/I-80) and the Illinois Route 390 Tollway.

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