



# NEWS

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### ILLINOIS TOLLWAY LAUNCHES ZERO WEATHER ROAD PATROLS TO AID CUSTOMERS DURING EXTREME COLD

*Patrols bolster H.E.L.P. trucks and State Police District 15*

**DOWNERS GROVE, IL** – The Illinois Tollway today launched around-the-clock Zero Weather Road Patrols to assist stranded customers during the severe cold weather and dangerous wind chills anticipated to continue into this week.

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.

“The Illinois Tollway always puts its customers’ safety first and is increasing patrols to offer a helping hand to drivers in need of assistance during the dangerously cold conditions,” said Illinois Tollway Executive Director Greg Bedalov. “We ask drivers and their passengers to stay safe by remaining in their vehicles and calling \*999 for assistance.”

While the Illinois Tollway’s Highway Emergency Lane Patrol (H.E.L.P.) trucks sponsored by State Farm run from 5 a.m. to 8 p.m., Monday through Friday, a minimum of 11 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 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. 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.

#### **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. Check your vehicle owner’s manual for recommended tire pressure.
- **Keep your gas tank at least half full** to avoid gas line freeze-up and ensure that you have extra driving time if the weather is unfavorable. Also, consider using winter or synthetic motor oil for colder temperatures, as conventional oils may thicken in colder temperatures. Check your vehicle manufacturer’s recommendations for oil that meets colder temperature ranges.
- **Keep a cold weather safety kit** in your car that includes gloves, boots, blankets, road flares, water and a flashlight with fresh batteries. Other items to include: jumper cables, first-aid kit, basic tool kit, hot packs, bottled water and non-perishable snacks such as granola or candy bars.

- 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.

The Illinois Tollway also reminds customers that six 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. The oases provide a variety of food, beverage and retail offerings, as well as 7-Eleven stores and 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 is an oasis on the Jane Addams Memorial Tollway (I-90) in Belvidere and another on the Reagan Memorial Tollway (I-88) in DeKalb.

### **Illinois Tollway Keeps Drivers Informed**

In addition to working to keep roads free of snow and ice, the Illinois Tollway provides drivers with information to help them reach their destinations safely during winter weather events.

The Illinois Tollway's Traffic and Incident Management System (TIMS) provides real-time travel times and roadway conditions on over-the-road electronic message signs throughout the Tollway.

Real-time roadway incident information including the type of incident, location and impact on traffic is also available on [www.illinoistollway.com](http://www.illinoistollway.com) or via Twitter to assist drivers in planning their trips. Drivers can sign up for Tollway tweets at [www.twitter.com](http://www.twitter.com) from the Tollway's website at [www.illinoistollway.com](http://www.illinoistollway.com). 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.

Before traveling, customers can access live camera feeds that offer "bird's-eye" views from 21 different locations along the Tollway system. The camera feeds are easily accessible by selecting the "View Traffic Cameras" link on the Tollway's homepage at [www.illinoistollway.com](http://www.illinoistollway.com).

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) for recorded information updated every two hours or as conditions require during winter storms.

### **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).

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