



NEWS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 10, 2016

ILLINOIS TOLLWAY PREPARED FOR WEEKEND SNOWFALL

Full fleet of snowplows ready for deployment; Snow Operations Center will be activated

DOWNERS GROVE, IL – The Illinois Tollway is mobilizing its full fleet of 192 snowplows in response to snowfall that is expected to begin Saturday and continue through the weekend, possibly affecting drivers during their Monday morning commutes. The Tollway’s Snow Operations Center will be open to manage the agency’s systemwide response.

“The safety of motorists on the Tollway system is always our top priority, but we take additional precautions in the winter months to make sure our customers get to their destinations safely,” said Illinois Tollway Executive Director Greg Bedalov. “Our Snow Operations team is ready to respond to this snowfall and we ask that customers do their part by slowing down, allowing plenty of extra time to reach their destinations and giving Tollway snowplows the room they need to clear the roads.”

To respond to this weather event, the Illinois Tollway will have a full complement of more than 200 staff and supervisors per shift to ensure that roadways are kept clear of snow and ice. To help with snow removal efforts, the Tollway has cancelled all temporary lane closures from 4 p.m. Saturday, December 10, through 9 a.m. Monday, December 12.

During heavy snowfall, snowplows often work in tandem to remove as much ice, slush and snow as possible from all lanes at once. When it is safe to pass, the plows spread out and allow traffic to flow around them.

Drivers whose vehicles become disabled should dial *999 from a cellphone for assistance from Illinois State Police District 15. Drivers should note the roadway and direction of travel and nearest milepost or crossroad.

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 illinoistollway.com or via Twitter to assist drivers in planning their trips. Drivers can sign up for Tollway Trip Tweets at twitter.com from the Tollway’s website at illinoistollway.com. Tweeters can follow all five Tollway Trips or just the roadways that interest them. The five are Tollway Trip 90, Tollway Trip 94/294, Tollway Trip 88, Tollway Trip 355 and Tollway Trip 390.

Before traveling, customers can access live camera feeds that offer “bird’s-eye” views from 20 different locations along the Tollway system. The camera feeds are easily accessible by selecting the “Interactive Tollway Map” link on the Tollway’s homepage at 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.

How the Tollway Prepares for Winter Weather

The Illinois Tollway strives to provide customers with the highest possible level of service during winter operations. Every effort is made to act quickly with snow and ice control measures that ensure the free flow of people, goods and services regardless of winter weather conditions.

Equipment

- The Illinois Tollway uses 192 snowplow trucks to clear its roadways of snow and ice.
- The Illinois Tollway used 1,020 plow blades last winter season.

Materials

- The Tollway is prepared with a supply of more than 85,000 tons of salt, 44,000 gallons of liquid calcium chloride and 2,500 tons of roadway abrasives in inventory.
- During the 2015-2016 winter season, the Tollway used nearly 41,200 tons of salt, nearly 6,700 gallons of liquid calcium chloride and 3,000 tons of roadway abrasives. The average salt usage per year over the last four years is nearly 60,000 tons.
- Typical salt applications are 100 lbs. per lane mile during small storms and 500 lbs. per lane mile during heavier snowstorms or extreme icing conditions. Onboard computer controls monitor salt usage based on the speed of the truck and the amount of salt being put down.

Personnel

- The Illinois Tollway has 12 maintenance facilities, each responsible for up to 30 center lane miles. Eight maintenance facilities are located in the Chicago metropolitan area and others are located in Rockford, Marengo, Dixon and DeKalb.
- During a full call-out, there are 192 equipment operators, 12 mechanics, 12 clerical staff and 12 supervisors required for each of two 12-hour shifts to provide for 24-hour coverage. The Illinois Tollway's Snow Operations Center is staffed with traffic center technicians and snow and ice control managers during winter weather events.
- It takes snow crews 2,259 lane miles to de-ice and plow one pass of the Illinois Tollway system during a snow and ice storm – the equivalent of driving from Chicago to San Francisco.
- In a typical 12-hour shift, snow crews can make up to eight complete passes of the 2,259 lane mile system for a total coverage of nearly 18,100 miles. In a 24-hour storm operation, this would equate to more than 36,000 miles of coverage – the equivalent of driving coast to coast across the United States nearly 13 times.

Tollway Travel Tips

The Tollway offers the following tips for winter weather events:

- Slow down and leave enough time to reach your destination.
- Do not make sudden lane changes and always use your turn signal.
- Don't follow too closely and increase your intervals between vehicles.
- Reduce speed in cash lanes at toll plazas.
- Remember to always wear your safety belt and ensure children under the age of 8 are securely restrained in child safety seats.
- Don't text or use a hand-held cellphone while driving. Both are illegal.
- Need Help? Dial *999. If your vehicle becomes disabled, park safely on the shoulder, raise your hood and remain in your vehicle. Dial *999 and assistance will be dispatched to your location.

- More information about safe winter driving is available at illinoistollway.com

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

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