



State of Illinois
Bruce Rauner, Governor



Illinois Department of Transportation
Randall S. Blankenhorn, Secretary

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Preparation is Key: ‘Winter Weather – Get it Together’

IDOT, ISP, Tollway urge motorists to prepare for winter driving conditions

SPRINGFIELD – As bitter cold creeps into Illinois, the state’s frontline weather responders remind motorists that preparation can help take the bite out of winter this season. The Illinois Department of Transportation, Illinois State Police and the Illinois Tollway encourage motorists to prepare for wintry driving conditions and remember: “Winter Weather – Get it Together.”

“Winter weather can be unpredictable in Illinois, but preparation today will make a safer tomorrow,” said Illinois Transportation Secretary Randy Blankenhorn. “Drivers should start easing into those winter driving behaviors now. Our snow-and-ice teams are ready, as always, to make this a safe, successful winter driving season.”

Throughout the winter, especially during adverse conditions, motorists should practice basic winter driving skills and build extra time into their schedules. As part of the “Winter Weather – Get it Together” campaign, all travelers are encouraged to follow these simple rules and tips during the coming months:

- Always wear a seat belt. It’s the law in Illinois.
- Slow down. Slower speeds, slower acceleration, slower steering and slower braking all are required in winter driving conditions.
- Drop it and drive. Put down the handheld devices – it, too, is the law in Illinois.
- Don’t crowd the plow. A snowplow operator’s field of vision is restricted. You may see them, but they may not see you.
- Avoid using cruise control in snow and ice.
- Watch out for black ice on roads that appear clear but can be treacherous.
- Be especially careful approaching intersections, ramps, bridges and shady areas. All are prone to icing.
- 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. Consider taking public transportation if it is an option.
- Prepare an emergency 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 a car charger in case of emergency.
- Follow Scott's Law. Slow down and move over for stopped emergency, construction and maintenance vehicles.
- For a list of suggested maintenance for your car, visit the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration's winter driving [website](#).
- For more winter driving tips, check out this short IDOT [video](#).

"Winter weather causes extremely dangerous driving with black ice and white out conditions," said ISP Director Leo P. Schmitz. "Plan ahead by checking your windshield wipers, vehicle fluid levels, proper tire inflation and tread depth. Remember to avoid unnecessary lane changes and as always, reduce your speed and increase following distances. Don't crowd the plow. Give them room to work. A snowplow operator's field of vision is restricted. You may see them, but they may not see you."

Before leaving the house, drivers are encouraged to check GettingAroundIllinois.com for continually updated information on winter road conditions, weather radars, road and bridge closures and other traffic-related information. The site was recently redesigned in a mobile-friendly format providing a more convenient way to access important information quickly. The winter road conditions map gives travelers the ability to zoom in to their location, travel route or destination and get real-time road conditions. At any time, motorists can check travel conditions by calling 1-800-452-IDOT (4368) or 1-800-TOLL-FYI.

"Winter weather can make driving challenging for our customers, so our priorities are to keep the roads clear and provide roadway information to help drivers safely reach their destinations," said Illinois Tollway Executive Director Greg Bedalov. "In return, we ask our customers to protect themselves and our workers by slowing down and increasing their distance from other vehicles, particularly during storms and severe weather."

For the upcoming winter, IDOT will have more than 1,700 trucks available for deployment to plow almost 16,000 miles of roads statewide, the equivalent of driving from Springfield to the tip of South America and back. Last year, IDOT spread almost 305,000 tons of salt statewide. This winter, salt domes throughout the state are at capacity, with more than 550,000 tons on hand. Four hundred brand-new snow plows are ready to be deployed throughout the state. The new trucks are more energy efficient and will reduce air pollution.

The Illinois Tollway is prepared to deploy its fleet of 196 snowplows for winter storms and has stockpiled more than 87,000 tons of salt to keep its 294-mile system of five tollways clear and safe for its 1.6 million daily drivers.

Please follow IDOT on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) for updates on travel throughout the winter.

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