



ILLINOIS TOLLWAY NEWS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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ILLINOIS TOLLWAY PREPARED FOR WEEKEND WINTER WEATHER

Drivers urged to reduce speed, be alert for plows and any vehicles on the roadside

DOWNERS GROVE, IL – The Illinois Tollway’s Snow Operations Center is open to manage the agency’s systemwide response to a variety of winter weather moving in this afternoon and continuing into Monday, January 20.

The Tollway is operating its full fleet of 196 snowplows to respond to snowfall anticipated across the region this afternoon and evening then changing into rain overnight Saturday, followed by falling temperatures and below-zero windchills. Drivers are advised to be prepared for travel delays and allow additional time during this evening’s commute and overnight travels.

"Our crews will be working throughout the weekend to keep the roads clear for travel. We are asking everyone to help out by giving plows the extra room they need to do their work and to allow for increased distance for other drivers to improve travel safety," said Illinois Tollway Executive Director José Alvarez. "In addition, roadway conditions will vary as the winter weather moves through the region this weekend, so we are reminding drivers to be prepared for changing conditions and to slow down or move over for any vehicle stopped on the side of the road."

To respond to this weather event, the Illinois Tollway has a full complement of more than 200 staff and supervisors working per shift to ensure that roadways are kept clear of snow and ice, as well as to provide motorist aid patrols and activate Zero Weather Road Patrols whenever temperatures or sustained wind chills fall below zero degrees.

The Zero Weather Road Patrols consist of crew cab trucks equipped with arrow boards for directing traffic around accidents or stranded vehicles and 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.

Drivers whose vehicles become disabled should remain in their cars until help arrives, activate their hazard lights and dial *999 from a cellphone for assistance from the Illinois Tollway and Illinois State Police District 15. Drivers will be asked to note the roadway they are using, as well as the direction of travel and nearest milepost or crossroad. For crashes involving property damage only, drivers should report the incident to 630-241-6800 ext. 5042 and continue driving.

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.

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. 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 Reagan Memorial Tollway (I-88) in DeKalb and on the Jane Addams Memorial Tollway (I-90) in Belvidere.

Drivers can receive real-time information on pavement conditions and roadway incidents by signing up for Tollway Trip Tweets at twitter.com from the Tollway's website at www.illinoistollway.com. Tweeters can follow all five Tollway Trips or just the roadways that interest them. The five are: 94_294_Tollway, @I_90_Tollway, @I_88_Tollway, @I_355_Tollway and @IL_390_Tollway.

The Tollway and other Illinois transportation and safety agencies also have launched the Give Them Distance campaign to remind drivers to slow down and change lanes safely when they see any stopped vehicle with flashing emergency or hazard lights. Drivers can visit www.GiveThemDistance.com for more information on this safe-driving initiative.

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 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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