

'Tis the Season: Winter Weather - Get It Together

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State's frontline weather responders help prepare motorists for snow and ice

SPRINGFIELD – As snow and ice season looms over Illinois, the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), Illinois State Police (ISP) and the Illinois Tollway are teaming up to remind motorists to be prepared and remember: “Winter Weather – Get it Together.” By taking steps to prepare for wintry driving conditions, the motoring public can do their part to make this a safe and successful winter driving season.

“Winter driving in Illinois comes with challenges that can be met if you are prepared,” said Illinois Transportation Secretary Randy Blankenhorn. “Our snow and ice teams, as always, are ready for the worst this winter. We’re counting on the public to do its part as well by keeping safety a top priority when traveling.”

Throughout the winter, especially during adverse conditions, motorists should be practicing basic winter driving skills and building extra time into their schedules. As part of the “Winter Weather – Get it Together” campaign, all travelers are encouraged to follow a few 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 snow plow 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 of them 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 car care 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 winter driving [website](#).
- For more winter driving tips, check out this short IDOT [video](#).

“Winter weather can severely impact driving conditions, especially when snow and ice are involved,” said ISP Director Leo Schmitz. “The Illinois State Police urge motorists to ensure their vehicle is prepared for the winter driving season and to adjust driving habits appropriately during poor weather conditions.”

At any time, motorists can check travel conditions by calling 1-800-452-IDOT (4368) or visiting [gettingaroundillinois.com](#). Illinois Tollway information is available at 1-800-TOLL-FYI.

“During the winter driving season we are focused on keeping our customers safe by keeping our roadways clear of snow and ice so drivers can safely complete their trips,” said Illinois Tollway Executive Director Greg Bedalov. “We ask our customers to assist us by taking additional precautions during severe weather, including slowing down, increasing their distance from other vehicles and giving our snowplows the room they need to do their work.”

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 more than 316,000 tons of salt statewide. This winter, salt domes throughout the state are at capacity, with almost 540,000 tons on hand. IDOT is preparing to have access to more than 330,000 additional tons, if necessary.

The Illinois Tollway is ready to mobilize its full fleet of 192 snowplows and has stockpiled more than 85,000 tons of salt to keep its 292-mile system operating safely for the 1.6 million drivers who use the Tollway daily.

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