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IDOT Winter Weather Crews Tackle First Storm of New Year

Snow Removal Efforts Underway Statewide to Ensure Motorist Safety

CHICAGO –The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) announced today that its frontline winter road crews are working around the clock statewide plowing and salting to keep roads clear and passable today and into the weekend. On Tuesday, IDOT crews began pre-treating state roads and bridges in anticipation of the storm, and will continue to monitor the weather to respond accordingly. IDOT wants to urge motorists to drive defensively and safely in this winter weather.

“IDOT crews are working diligently around the state to ensure roads are clear and safe,” said Illinois Transportation Secretary Ann L. Schneider. “With the continuous snowfall in some areas and anticipated below freezing temperatures, we ask motorists to take extra precautions and only travel if absolutely necessary, slow down, buckle up and stay off their cellphones.”

Currently, IDOT has 1,290 trucks and more than 1,400 employees throughout the state responding to the storm. IDOT districts with winter weather warnings still in place this evening will bring in additional employees to work the night shift. IDOT is also redirecting resources, as needed, to accommodate areas with higher levels of snowfall.

During the severely cold weather expected, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security advises that Illinois residents limit exposure to the cold temperatures, dress in layers, check in on others who may need additional assistance and bring pets indoors.

Other safety tips to remember:

- 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.
- Allow extra time for travel during the winter months.
- Watch out for black ice on roads that appear clear but can be treacherous. Take it slow when approaching intersections, off-ramps, bridges and shady areas - all are prone to black ice, which is often invisible.
- Always keep your gas tank at least two-thirds full to help prevent the vehicle's fuel line from freezing.
- 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.
- Always carry 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 dial *999 for roadway assistance.
- Always wear a safety belt.

Motorists are urged to check travel conditions before any trip. You can get road condition information by calling 1-800-452-IDOT (4368), Illinois Tollway information by calling 1-800-TOLL-FYI or online at www.gettingaroundillinois.com and click on the “winter road conditions” icon.