

PennDOT Prepped for Winter Storm, Anti-icing Roads in East Central PA

Allentown, PA – With heavy snow forecasted today and tomorrow, the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) is pre-treating major roads in advance of the winter weather forecast. Anti-icing trucks have been out on high-volume roads in the PennDOT District 5 region in Berks, Carbon, Lehigh, Monroe, Northampton, and Schuylkill counties.

Anti-icing involves wetting the highway with salt brine before a storm's arrival. The solution lowers the freezing point of water and slows or prevents ice from forming a bond with the pavement during the early stages of a storm.

The salt brine is spread from sprayers attached to the brine tank on PennDOT trucks. The trucks have signs on the backs indicating their purpose. The public can track the location of PennDOT plow trucks on www.511PA.com.

The department's primary goal is to keep roads passable, not completely free of ice and snow. PennDOT will continue to treat roadways throughout the storm until precipitation stops and roads are clear.

Heavy snowfall rates and strong winds may result in squalls. Motorists always should be alert for sudden squalls which can strike with little or no warning and quickly cause roads to become snow covered. Heavy squalls also can cause whiteout conditions, virtually eliminating a driver's visibility. Additionally, falling temperatures and blowing and drifting snow can cause icy areas on roadways, including overpasses and bridges.

While PennDOT recommends not traveling during winter storms, motorists can check conditions on more than 40,000 roadway miles, including color-coded winter conditions on 2,900 miles, by visiting www.511PA.com. 511PA, which is free and available 24 hours a day, provides traffic delay warnings, weather forecasts, traffic speed information and access to more than 1,000 traffic cameras.

511PA is also available through a smartphone application for iPhone and Android devices, by calling 5-1-1, or by following regional Twitter alerts accessible on the 511PA website.

The department also asks motorists to allow plenty of space when driving near plow trucks. Also, for their own safety and the safety of plow operators, motorists should never attempt to pass a truck while it is plowing or spreading winter materials.

PennDOT reminds motorists to pack an emergency kit for their vehicles. A basic kit should include non-perishable food, water, blanket, small shovel and warm clothes. When preparing an emergency kit, motorists should take into account special needs of passengers such as baby food, pet supplies or medications and pack accordingly.

PennDOT also reminds citizens that downloadable materials, including home and car emergency kit checklists and emergency plan templates, are available at www.Ready.PA.gov or by downloading the free ReadyPA app for Apple or Android devices. Citizens can also find information about getting involved in local emergency response efforts and other volunteer opportunities through the ReadyPA website.

For more winter driving tips and information on how PennDOT treats winter storms, visit www.PennDOT.gov/winter.

Subscribe to PennDOT news in Berks, Carbon, Lehigh, Monroe, Northampton, and Schuylkill counties at www.penndot.gov/District5.

Follow regional PennDOT information on Twitter at www.twitter.com/511PAAllentown, and like the department on Facebook at www.facebook.com/PennsylvaniaDepartmentofTransportation.

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