



COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY
TRANSPORTATION CABINET
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GOVERNOR

Jim Gray
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Governor Beshear, Transportation Cabinet Warn Kentuckians of Pending Travel Impacts Caused by First Major Winter Storm of the Season

State crews prepared, motorists advised to avoid travel during peak storm activity

FRANKFORT, Ky. (Dec. 22, 2022) – With arctic temperatures, strong winds and snow expected to appear this afternoon into Friday, Gov. Andy Beshear and Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (KYTC) officials urge travelers to watch for hazardous road conditions that can create slick spots, limit visibility and cause traffic delays. Highway crews are on high alert and are prepared to deploy and respond as needed through the holiday weekend.

Travelers are encouraged to pack an emergency car kit, monitor forecasts and consider alternate travel plans to limit traveling Thursday evening into Friday.

Gov. Andy Beshear said the chief danger was extreme cold, with minus-double-digit wind chills due to high wind gusts and steep, rapid temperature drops. The Governor [declared a state of emergency](#), activated the Kentucky National Guard, implemented a prohibition on price gouging and took other emergency steps aimed at protecting lives of Kentuckians.

“I don’t want to lose one person to this storm,” Gov. Beshear said. “If you can stay off the roads, please do and expect the roads to be treacherous tonight through tomorrow. While we aren’t expecting large amounts of snow, flash freezing and strong winds will cause hazardous road conditions. Our crews will do everything they can to keep roads passable, but there are limitations to even the best efforts that will make travel unsafe. If you have to be out, give yourself plenty of time to reach your destination and pack an emergency car kit.”

Dry, powdery snow driven by winds gusting up to 45 mph can create whiteout conditions that dramatically reduce visibility. Slippery road conditions are possible tonight into Friday morning due to drastic drops in temperatures that can freeze wet spots on the road. KYTC crews will be monitoring conditions and working to keep routes passable.

Weather that will cause road conditions to deteriorate are forecast to reach Western Kentucky Thursday afternoon and move east into Central and Eastern Kentucky Thursday night into early Friday morning.

Crews will determine the best treatment approaches and region-specific response plans based on the timing of storm impacts. With rain expected Thursday afternoon ahead of the snow, pretreating routes with brine will be ineffective in some areas as the solution can become diluted or wash away. Crews plan to use a calcium chloride additive that makes salt more effective in extreme temperatures. Flash freezing is possible due to fast temperature drops. Drivers are reminded that bridges and overpasses freeze sooner than roadways, so drivers should slow down and proceed with caution.

“Our employees are prepared with stocked supplies and equipment to respond to winter weather threats, and they will be on alert through the holiday weekend,” Secretary Gray said. “We’re up against severe conditions that will cause travel delays and hazards. With high winds, downed trees on roadways are also possible.”

“Safe roads take everyone’s cooperation, so I urge Kentuckians to stay weather alert by monitoring weather forecasts, checking traffic on a navigational app like WAZE or goky.ky.gov, and not to drive when conditions are at their worst. This is the time to pack an emergency car kit to keep you and your families safe in the worst-case scenario of being stranded while temperatures are dangerously cold,” Secretary Gray said.

A fleet of 1,365 state-owned and contracted plow trucks are available to be deployed across Kentucky. The cabinet has stockpiled over 300,000 tons of salt, nearly 1 million gallons of brine for anti-icing efforts and more than 1 million gallons of calcium chloride – an additive to salt for deicing.

KYTC maintains most roads, streets and bridges that are part of the State Highway System. Examples include interstates, parkways, and U.S. route designations. Route designations are based on factors such as traffic volume and connectivity to critical services like hospitals.

“Please remember to buckle up and put the phone down to keep you and others safe on the roads,” said Gray. “Caregivers are reminded to remove puffy coats from infants and children when buckling up to make sure their harness and belt stay snug. Lightweight jackets and blankets are a great way to keep them warm in the car.”

Driver Tips

Motorists are encouraged to prepare and to stay safe by following these tips:

- Alter travel plans to avoid driving during the peak of weather activity.
- Drive with a full tank of gas and pack an [emergency car kit](#) that contains essential items like blankets, ice scrapers, jumper cables, blankets, a flashlight, a cell phone charger, non-perishable snacks and a first aid kit should you get stranded on the road.
- Winterize your vehicle. Check your car battery, tire pressure and tread, and brakes. Ensure your heater, defroster, headlights and windshield wipers are working properly.
- When snow and/or ice are on roadways, drive slowly no matter what type of vehicle you drive. It takes more time and distance to stop your vehicle in poor weather, so brake early and slowly.

- Pay attention to weather advisories and allow more time to travel for routine commutes. Expect delays.
- Slow down when approaching intersections, off-ramps, bridges or shaded areas. These are all candidates for developing “black ice” – a thin coating of clear ice that can form on the pavement surface that may be difficult to see.
- Maintain a safe distance from snowplows and other heavy highway equipment, and do not pass snowplows on the shoulder.
- Eliminate distractions while driving, such as using a phone and or eating.

Visit snowky.ky.gov for snow and ice resources, like priority route maps, safety tips and highway district updates. Download the free WAZE app or visit goky.ky.gov to check traffic conditions before you travel. The map also offers access to view live traffic cameras on interstates and parkways. Follow us on Facebook and Twitter for updates.

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