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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Gov. Beshear Urges Caution with Multiple Winter Storms Reaching
Kentucky**

*National Guard activated to assist residents in Ashland; state office buildings to close at 1 p.m.
EST Monday*

FRANKFORT, Ky. (Feb. 15, 2021) – With several inches of snow expected to fall today and into the night throughout much of the commonwealth, Gov. Andy Beshear said Kentuckians should avoid travel unless absolutely necessary.

The Governor said the Kentucky National Guard has been activated to go door to door to check on residents in Ashland and transport people to warming stations if necessary. The National Guard is on alert with more soldiers standing by with equipment ready to assist if necessary.

Gov. Beshear said with three winter storms with snow, ice and freezing temperatures reaching the commonwealth in less than a week, Kentuckians should be extremely cautious and make plans to keep their families safe and warm.

The Governor said two Kentuckians were lost to winter weather during last week's storm and possibly another overnight.

"We don't want to lose anybody else. We have been through too much. We have sacrificed too much," Gov. Beshear said. "We have the ability to work virtually and stay off the roads more than ever before, so take care of one another."

The first wave of the storm hit much of Kentucky overnight, with the heaviest snow expected today during the afternoon rush hour.

The greatest potential for significant snow accumulations includes much of Central Kentucky, with some areas projected to receive up to eight inches of snow. The heaviest snowfall will take place in a period between 3 p.m. EST today through 1 a.m. EST Tuesday.

Following the Governor's media briefing, the Personnel Cabinet notified state employees that Executive Branch buildings will be closed beginning at 1 p.m. EST, except for employees who provide essential service operations to the commonwealth. Executive Branch agencies will continue to provide services to the citizens of the commonwealth remotely. State employees with questions regarding this closure should contact either their agency's management or human resources office.

Another system, beginning Wednesday night into Thursday night, will bring an additional wintry mix across Kentucky.

Maps from the National Weather Service's 5:30 a.m. EST briefing are [linked here](#).

The Kroger vaccination site in Frankfort will be closed on Tuesday. Those with appointments are being rescheduled for next Tuesday, Feb. 23.

The Governor said a decision would be made later in the day on other vaccination sites.

"This weather is going to slow our vaccinations some, but we believe we will be able to pick right back up," Gov. Beshear said.

Kentucky Emergency Management Director Michael Dossett said Kentucky is experiencing an extremely unusual dynamic for severe weather in the state with three severe weather events in very close proximity.

"Demonstrating the resilience of Kentuckians, we navigated the most recent severe storm event last week with your continued awareness of surroundings and diligence in checking the safety of your friends and neighbors," said Director Dossett. "Let's redouble our efforts in this next challenge, with special attention for all of our state and local emergency responders who will be assisting in this dangerous storm event."

Kentucky Transportation Cabinet crews have been out in force to proactively pretreat roads where conditions allow and respond to snow and ice's damaging effects on roadways.

Transportation Secretary Jim Gray said travel could become difficult to impossible.

"What we're facing is three winter storms in eight days," said Secretary Gray. "This next round of winter weather will bring varying conditions across the state, but what remains constant is our crew's commitment to maintaining mobility along critical routes and our plea to the public to avoid unnecessary travel."

Crews are out plowing and treating routes across the state. Snowfall rates are expected to exceed one inch per hour causing roadways to be blanketed with snow shortly after being plowed. In Western Kentucky, light, powdering snow has been blowing into roadways.

Yesterday evening began with some freezing fog in Southern and Southeast Kentucky. Roadway conditions quickly worsened, resulting in several crashes along the Interstate 75 corridor in Rockcastle and Laurel counties. This morning, a crash shut down the westbound lanes of Interstate 64 in Carter County, which reopened to traffic several hours later.

Ice on roadways and bridges remains the greatest challenge as frigid temperatures create slick road surfaces, and ice can cause more downed trees and power lines for crews to remove. Ice accumulations of more than half an inch are still expected in Southern Kentucky. This will significantly impact the I-75 corridor in Madison, Rockcastle, Laurel and Whitley counties.

Crews add calcium chloride to salt to help melt snow faster when temperatures are below the freezing point. While the solution is helpful, it is less effective after dark and when traffic volumes are reduced.

The National Weather Service warns travel will become difficult this afternoon into tonight. Transportation officials urge Kentuckians to avoid being on the roads as much as possible. Ice poses hazards to all vehicle types, and drivers must slow down and exercise extreme caution. Traffic signals may become dark due to power outages and should be treated as a four-way stop by motorists.

Snow and ice resources, including traffic information, priority route maps and highway district news updates, are available at snowky.ky.gov.

If you experience a downed power line or power outage, please contact your local utility company. If possible, prepare for the need to use an alternate source of heat. Be aware of the dangers of alternate heat sources and carbon monoxide poisoning. Generators, camp stoves or charcoal grills should always be used outdoors and at least 20 feet away from windows. Never use a gas stovetop or oven to heat your home. Visit <http://www.cdc.gov/co/guidelines.htm> for more information.

Last Wednesday, the Kentucky Division of Emergency Management activated its State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) to monitor earlier storm systems and coordinate with critical Emergency Support Function partners in transportation, law enforcement, power and utilities. The SEOC is currently activated at Level 4, but will transition to Level 3 at noon today.

Last Thursday, Gov. Beshear [closed state offices](#) due to dangerous road conditions and issued a State of Emergency, which remains in effect, as an initial winter storm blanketed much of the commonwealth in a wintry mix of snow and ice. Since Thursday, freezing temperatures and ice have remained throughout much of the commonwealth.

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