



COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY
TRANSPORTATION CABINET
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Transportation Crews Preparing for Significant Winter Storm Threatening
Prolonged Icy Road Conditions**

Motorists are advised to avoid unnecessary travel during winter event

FRANKFORT, Ky. (Feb. 9, 2021) – Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (KYTC) highway snowfighters today are preparing for a major winter storm packing damaging ice ahead of snow and possibly bitter cold that will impact road conditions across the state.

“Keeping roadways as safe as possible is one of the most important roles of the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet, and that is never more important than in snow and ice season,” said Gov. Andy Beshear. “The potential hazardous road conditions brought on by winter weather are another good reason Kentuckians are encouraged to stay healthy and safe at home.”

“This is forecast to be the kind of severe winter weather that presents us with multiple challenges – a prolonged storm with freezing rain, bringing a buildup of ice that not only makes for slick roads but also can bring down tree limbs and power lines,” Transportation Secretary Jim Gray said. “The ice will be followed by snow and possibly single-digit temperatures.”

Weather forecasts call for a mix of rain, freezing rain, sleet and snow beginning tonight, moving west to east. Ice accumulation of a half-inch or more, combined with 1 to 3 inches of snow, is possible over a broad area. Damage to trees and power lines is likely – a condition that poses its own dangers to KYTC crews and can delay road response work. The potential for single-digit cold temperatures impacts the effectiveness of road salt which works best when temperatures are above the freezing point. Motorists are strongly advised to avoid any unnecessary travel over the next several days.

The KYTC’s 12 highway district crews will pretreat routes, where appropriate, and monitor evolving weather and road conditions. Once a storm has begun, the focus is on keeping high-priority state routes, such as interstates and parkways, passable. Crews then concentrate on heavily traveled state routes before turning to lower-volume routes. Kentuckians should expect delays in road clearing efforts. The Cabinet has established a snow emergency plan to deploy resources within each county,

as needed, to cover highest priority routes. Route designations are based on factors such as traffic volume and connectivity to hospitals and other critical services. Snow priority maps for each county can be viewed [here](#).

KYTC has nearly 2,000 frontline employees, supplemented by contracted crews, to maintain safe travel on state routes – a mission complicated by the ongoing novel coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic.

KYTC snowfighters spend several months every year training, stocking up on salt and road treatment supplies and making sure the cabinet’s 1,024 plow trucks are serviced and ready. This year, the cabinet’s proactive planning had to take into account the COVID-19 pandemic, which to date has killed more than 4,000 Kentuckians and has the potential for sidelining entire work crews.

“We ask Kentuckians to partner with us by paying attention to weather advisories, limiting trips during poor weather conditions, and showing our crews grace as we make necessary adjustments brought on by the pandemic. This is uncharted territory and we will get through this together,” Secretary Gray said.

The public can partner by following these tips:

- Reduce speed.
- Give KYTC road crews space on the roads to work.
- Have an emergency kit in the vehicle should you be stranded.
- Stay in traffic lanes. Don’t drive on shoulders and emergency lanes.
- If you encounter a traffic signal that isn’t working, treat it as a four-way stop.
- Be patient. Remember that cleanup work is part of the job for KYTC crews.

Crews will follow healthy at work guidelines and maintenance facilities are closed to the public to minimize exposure. KYTC maintains the majority of roadways and bridges that are part of the State Highway System. Examples include interstates, parkways and U.S. route designations.

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