

PRESS RELEASE

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GEORGIA DOT CREWS ARE PREPARED FOR WINTER STORM

Help Us Keep You and the Roadways Safe

Atlanta, Ga. – As Georgia DOT forces begin laying materials and clearing roadways in north Georgia, Metro Atlanta roadway crews are preparing for the window of opportunity after the rain moves out to begin applying brine and spreading salt and gravel materials on the roadway. The multi-layered winter storm forecasted to move into the Metro area this afternoon is expected to dump sleet and snow with strong wind gusts later this afternoon. As a result, Georgia DOT will immediately begin spreading materials as soon as rain moves out of the area.

“Our biggest concern is the small window of time that we have to get ahead of the snow and ice that is forecasted,” said Georgia DOT Commissioner Russell R. McMurtry. “We will have our crews strategically placed in locations where they can quickly spread the materials on all the major interstates and state routes. But we must have the public’s cooperation in this effort. We cannot spread the materials if we are stuck in traffic; and without the materials on the roadway before the snow hits, we lose a valuable tool in fighting the effects of this winter storm.”

The latest forecast indicates a window between 3-6 pm in Metro Atlanta where the Department will have trucks on the highways applying brine and spreading materials. It is essential that the public be off the roads at this time to enable GDOT in our efforts to successfully get this material on the roadway.

Northeast Georgia road crews are scouting, treating isolated icy spots and plowing roadways in Union, Towns, Rabun, Lumpkin and Habersham counties. Northwest Georgia crews began monitoring conditions overnight and begin 12-hour shifts this morning. Metro Atlanta crews will begin 12-hour shifts at noon today. The Governor has issued a state of emergency for 21 counties ending Sunday, Jan. 24, at midnight and has ordered state offices closed at noon today.

Georgia DOT’s teams stand ready to address the storm. They include:

- 16 brine trucks to apply materials across Metro and north Georgia interstates and state routes. More than 150,000 gallons of brine has been prepared and we have the ability to produce additional brine as the need arises;
- 18 Plow truck teams (approximately 5 plow trucks per team) will be strategically located on key interstates and state routes to begin plowing and treating roadways as soon as snow begins falling;
- 15 Strike Teams which include Georgia DOT HEROs, Georgia State Patrol, Georgia Forestry Department and the Department of Natural Resources, will begin patrolling Metro Atlanta interstates at noon on Friday to clear incidents and accidents blocking travel lanes ; and
- 41 Special Response Teams will also be on hand to address “hot spot” areas in the Metro Atlanta area.

“As in all winter storms, we caution motorists to pay attention to our trucks spreading materials. Stay back a safe distance for your safety and for the safety of our crews working to clear the roadways,” McMurtry added.

During hazardous winter weather conditions, Georgia DOT advises motorists to:

- **Call 511 to report icy conditions on interstates and state routes;**

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- *If possible, postpone travel until daylight hours when road conditions such as black ice are more visible;*
- *Do not pass a Georgia DOT dump truck spreading the salt/gravel mixture, as gravel may kick up and could break car windshields — follow at least 100 feet behind Department vehicles;*
- *Be aware of Georgia DOT crews working to clear snow and ice from interstates and state routes;*
- **SLOW DOWN** at least half your normal speed and use a low gear as you drive;
- *Treat a non-working traffic signal as a four-way stop; and*
- *Beware of black ice (especially on bridges) and watch for fallen trees or power lines*

Georgia DOT urges travelers to exercise caution and call 511 for updated information on roadway conditions before getting on the road during a winter weather event. Georgia 511 is a free phone service that provides real-time traffic and travel information statewide, including winter weather closures, reports of icing or other hazardous conditions on interstates and state routes. Callers also can transfer to operators to request assistance or report incidents 24 hours a day, seven days a week. More information is available at www.511ga.org. For more information on Georgia DOT, please visit www.dot.ga.gov.

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