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Be Ready, Be Safe: Alabama Prepares for Wintry Weather

ALEA Urges Motorists to Prepare Now and Drive with Caution

MONTGOMERY – Forecasts are calling for extremely cold weather, which could potentially produce a wintry mix in certain areas across the state leading up to and through the Christmas holidays.

The Alabama Law Enforcement Agency (ALEA) encourages motorists who absolutely must drive during severe cold-weather events to use extreme caution and to expect roadways and bridges/overpasses to be icy. ALEA’s Troopers and Special Agents will be on standby to assist before, during and after any significant weather events.

“At any moment, weather conditions can change drastically,” ALEA’s Secretary Hal Taylor said. “As weather forecasters continue to predict frigid temperatures ahead of the upcoming holidays. Our Agency is already preparing, with all divisions and units developing and implementing wintry-weather operation plans. These efforts will ensure that both ALEA Troopers and Special Agents are fully prepared to aid and assist motorists traveling across the state in the coming days. However, we strongly encourage and recommend that both citizens and visitors prepare now for the incoming weather. In the event conditions worsen, we urge motorists to adjust travel plans and avoid driving in severe weather.”

In addition, ALEA offers the following traffic safety tips for preparing for the wintry weather, as well as for traveling in hazardous conditions:

- Do not utilize your vehicle’s cruise control, which creates issues and could cause you to lose control of your vehicle, especially when crossing frozen or iced-over bridges.
- Monitor local news for information on weather conditions and travel advisories, and check road conditions at <https://algotraffic.com/>.
- Report traffic crashes or other emergencies by calling 911.
- Remain alert for emergency vehicles and obey Alabama’s “move over” law.
- Keep vehicles in good operating condition. Check antifreeze levels, use windshield washer solution suitable for freezing weather conditions, and keep gas tanks at least half full.
- Remember weather and roadway conditions can deteriorate quickly. Adapt speeds to existing roadway conditions and be alerted to changing weather and the possibility of icy and slippery roads.

- Unlike tornadoes or thunderstorms that can pop up in a matter of minutes, winter storms usually provide us with days to prepare. Advisories, watches, and warnings are issued by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the NWS. We encourage everyone to stay connected with their local news stations, as well as ALEA's social media pages, for updates on weather and road conditions.
- During inclement weather, turn on headlights and windshield wipers, and maintain a safe distance between your vehicle and other vehicles.
- Pay attention to bridges and overpasses, which tend to develop hazardous "black ice."
- Keep a blanket, first-aid kit, charged cell phone and other emergency supplies in your vehicle.

Before the Storm Tips:

- Create a family plan for winter emergencies and discuss how to stay safe in all conditions.
- Stay aware by monitoring the local forecast via radio, TV, internet, and/or smartphone alerts.
- Check both your home and your car's emergency supply kits to ensure everything is in working order.
- Update your smoke detectors and carbon-monoxide detectors to versions that have a battery backup.

During the Storm Tips:

- Avoid being on roadways.
- Bring in pets who usually stay outside.
- Stay indoors as much as possible. If you absolutely must go outside, keep the duration of your trips short.
- Remember the most effective way to stay warm is by wearing multiple layers of clothing.
- Keep an emergency supply kit in your car if you cannot avoid driving. Be extra careful driving and remain aware of your surroundings.
- DO NOT use a stove to supply heat for your home. Likewise, do not use outdoor grills or gas/propane heaters.
- Do not use generators indoors. Plug appliances directly into your generator. DO NOT plug your generator into your household's electrical wiring.

After the Storm Tips:

- Make sure roadways are safe before driving. While precipitation may have stopped, roads can remain dangerous to drive on for days afterward.
- Dress appropriately for the temperature. Continue dressing in layers and avoid extended exposure.
- Stay away from downed lines, and DO NOT pull tree limbs off downed power lines or make repairs to Alabama Power equipment. Call 1-800-888-2726 and wait for help.