

NEBRASKA

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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Pete Ricketts, Governor

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NDOT Encourages Drivers to Prepare for Winter Driving

October 28, 2019 (Lincoln, Neb.) — As winter weather approaches the state, the Nebraska Department of Transportation (NDOT) encourages drivers to be prepared for winter driving conditions.

NDOT works closely with its partners at the Nebraska State Patrol (NSP), Nebraska Emergency Management Agency and the National Weather Service to be well prepared for winter weather before it approaches. While NDOT strives to be ready for all winter storms, some are so severe, no amount of preparation can forestall hazardous conditions that come with extremely low temperatures, low visibility, heavy snowfall or dangerous ice.

“Last season, Nebraska experienced one of the worst winters on record. We had more snow events during the winter of 2018-2019 than anyone can recall at the Nebraska Department of Transportation,” said Director Kyle Schneweis. “Our crews were well prepared to tackle last season and they remain committed to clearing the roadways as quickly as possible. We continue to ask travelers to keep an eye on the weather and travel conditions before you head out the door. Your safe travel is our business.”

When winter weather conditions are hazardous, NDOT may advise motorists to restrict their travel or even advise them not to travel at all. Such advisories are not issued without considerable thought and weighing the effects. Ultimately, the reduction of travelers on the roadway during a winter event improves safety for all who share the roadway, while also assisting NDOT with timely snow and ice removal.

As winter storms approach, travelers are urged to be alert, be aware and check the most up-to-date travel conditions available through 511, Nebraska’s Advanced Traveler Information System. The system is available at all times via Nebraska 511’s smartphone app, online at www.511.nebraska.gov or by dialing 511 on your mobile device within the state, or if dialing from a landline or outside Nebraska at 1-800-906-9069.

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Travelers are also encouraged to utilize NDOT's Plow Tracker at <https://plows.nebraska.gov/index.html> where the public will be able to observe road conditions in real time from the cabs of NDOT snowplows. Please note that weather conditions are often worse than they appear on camera.

After assessing the conditions, should individuals determine travel is still necessary, NDOT reminds motorists to be prepared with warm clothing, water and food. If traveling a significant distance, a winter weather survival kit stocked with additional items is recommended. Additionally, travelers are advised to not drive faster than conditions allow. Surfaces will be slick under the snow and visibility may be poor. Allow plenty of time to arrive at your destination.

With snowplows out on the roads, travelers also are urged to be cautious and courteous to those operating them, making sure to:

- Slow down as you approach plows. They travel slowly, usually 25 to 30 mph or less.
- Stay well behind plows to give you and them plenty of room. When traveling outside of a business or residential district, it is unlawful to follow a highway maintenance vehicle (snowplow, truck or grader) more closely than 100 feet when it is plowing snow, spreading salt or sand, or displaying a flashing amber or blue light.
- Never pass a plow on the right – snowplows are equipped with “wing plows” which extend beyond the truck itself.
- Know where plows are and actions they may be taking while they plow snow.

Further, motorists are reminded to make sure everyone in their vehicle wears a seat belt and children are in a car safety seat. They also should not use cruise control in wet or snowy weather, and they should keep a full gas tank.

For safe-driving tips and winter weather information, visit NDOT's website, <http://dot.nebraska.gov/safety/driving/winter/>

As a reminder, the NSP Highway Helpline is available 24 hours per day for motorists in need of assistance. Drivers can reach NSP by dialing *55 from any cell phone. Call 911 for any emergency.

#NDOT#

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