

State Transportation Crews Ready to Respond to Winter Weather This Snow and Ice Season

FRANKFORT, Ky. (Nov. 13, 2018) – Stocked salt supplies, trained maintenance crews and 1,400 plow trucks are ready to respond during this snow and ice season. Approximately 2,000 Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (KYTC) snowfighters are responsible for maintaining more than 28,000 miles of road during winter weather events.

“November is the launch of snow and ice season for the Cabinet, and our crews are prepared to respond to the effects winter weather can have on our roadways,” said KYTC Secretary Greg Thomas. “While Kentucky weather can be unpredictable, we’ve done our best to prepare and encourage drivers to also take steps now to be ready on the road when conditions change.”

KYTC crews and support staff have been briefed and trained on best practices for snow and ice removal in an effort to keep motorists moving on Kentucky roadways. A statewide brigade of trucks and plows are ready for deployment before, during and after winter weather events, and a strike force of eight plows is positioned for district deployment from Frankfort during major winter weather events. The Cabinet is stocked with a supply of 340,000 tons of salt, 1 million gallons of salt brine for anti-icing and 1 million gallons of calcium chloride, an additive to salt for deicing.

“Our mission for snow and ice removal is to keep traffic moving safely with an emphasis on maintaining mobility along critical corridors and priority routes,” said Andy Barber, state highway engineer. “Our statewide teams strive to provide a uniform response to achieve safe driving conditions on Kentucky roadways while considering environmental and economic factors to most efficiently use state dollars.”

During routine snow and ice occurrences, crews operate using snow and ice priority route maps for maximum efficiency of equipment and materials usage. Additionally, KYTC has expanded the use of automatic vehicle location (AVL) units to approximately half of state-owned trucks. This technology captures air and pavement temperatures, speed data, and salt or liquid distribution rates during response activities. This provides helpful information and informs decisions regarding how to efficiently apply materials. The data captured electronically will also reduce the amount of manual recordkeeping of staff hours and materials used during events.

“KYTC is committed to exploring the most effective ways to treat roadways, and AVL units provide us with more data than ever to gauge our performance during and after snow events,” said Barber.

For severe winter storm events, the Cabinet has established a snow emergency plan similar to state emergency plans for other major weather events (e.g., floods, hurricanes and earthquakes). The snow emergency plan will allow available resources within each county to be deployed as needed to ensure optimal mobility for the highest priority routes that lead to critical locations, such as medical facilities. The Cabinet’s snow and ice information website, snowky.ky.gov, provides details about priority routes, helpful winter weather tips, fact sheets and videos on salt application and snow removal.

Partnering with the public to prepare

Safe roadways are a shared responsibility, especially during inclement weather when risks increase. KYTC encourages motorists to prepare for winter and remain safe by following these tips:

Stock vehicles with ice scrapers, jumper cables, blankets, a flashlight, cell phone charger, non-perishable snacks and first aid kit.

Winterize vehicles. Have your car battery, tire pressure and brakes checked. Make sure your heater, defroster, headlights and windshield wipers are working properly.

When snow and/or ice are on roadways, drive slowly no matter what type of vehicle you’re in. It takes more time and distance to stop your vehicle in adverse weather conditions, so break early and slowly.

Pay attention to weather advisories. Weather will impact your commute on some level.

Slow down when approaching intersections, off-ramps, bridges or shaded areas. These are all candidates for developing black ice—a thin coating of clear ice that can form on the pavement surface that may be difficult to see.

Travel only as necessary during major snow events. It’s better to be stranded at home than on the road.

Maintain a safe distance from snowplows and other heavy highway equipment.

Do not pass snowplows on the shoulder.

Allow more time to travel for routine commutes.

Know before you go. Download the free Waze app or visit goky.ky.gov to check traffic conditions before you travel.

Eliminate distractions while driving (e.g. using phone and eating).

Cooperate with the expectations of the Quick Clearance law, which requires drivers to move vehicles to the shoulder in the event of a non-injury crash.

Throughout the winter season, KYTC will be highlighting the men and women across the state who serve on the frontlines and behind the scenes of the Cabinet’s snow and ice removal efforts. Follow @KYTC and like our page on facebook.

Coat Drive Aims to Help Thousands of Kids in Foster Care

FRANKFORT, Ky. (Nov. 19, 2018) – As you make out your shopping list, please consider buying an extra coat or hoodie for kids in foster care. A coat and hoodie donation drive, coordinated between staff at the Cabinet for Health and Family Services’ Department for Income Support (DIS) and the Kentucky County Attorneys Association (KCAA), is now collecting new coats and hoodies.

The DIS includes the Office of Child Support Enforcement (CSE) and Disability Determination Services (DDS). “This project has the potential to help keep thousands of foster kids warm this winter,” said W. Bryan Hubbard, DIS Commissioner.

CHFS recently spoke to a local county attorney about the coat drive and why her office is excited to participate. To view the story, follow this link <https://youtu.be/0aZNMiamsZc>.

A new child’s coat or hoodie can be dropped off at any of the state’s regional child support enforcement offices, any County Attorney child support office in the state, the CSE central office at 730 Schenkel Lane, Frankfort, the DDS central office at 102 Athletic Drive, Frankfort, or the DDS Louisville office at 10535 Lagrange Road, Louisville. Donations are accepted through Friday, Dec. 14.

“Our staff and the county attorneys work so closely with families; they recognize that there is an immediate need for warm coats and hoodies as the number of children in care has significantly grown over the last year,” continued Commissioner Hubbard. “They really put their hearts into this. Community members and partners of both agencies have responded. We’re proud of the collaboration and grateful for the items that are being donated.”

The coats will be distributed across the Commonwealth to children in out of home care administered by the CHFS Department for Community Based Services.

Last year, more than 700 new coats and \$2,150 in direct cash contributions were collected by DIS with cash contributions used to buy additional coats. The estimated value of the 2017 employee charity drive was about \$12,000. This year’s effort expands on the 2017 donation drive and is expected to have an even bigger impact, with the KCAA and County Attorneys across the state playing a much larger role this year.

First 72 On You - Be Prepared to Stay Safe and Healthy in Cold Temps

As part of the year-long First 72 On You campaign, the Department for Public Health (DPH), within the Cabinet for Health and Family Services (CHFS), is spotlighting cold weather preparedness efforts to remind Kentuckians of the dangers of carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning, hypothermia and foodborne illness from possible power outages and cold weather conditions.

“When temperatures drop significantly below normal such as during a cold spell or during a long-term power outage, staying warm and safe can become a challenge,” said Jeffrey Howard Jr., M.D., DPH commissioner. “Carbon monoxide poisoning and hypothermia are deadly and should be taken seriously. We urge Kentuckians to take steps to prevent exposure to both cold temperatures and carbon monoxide by avoiding using alternative heating sources like propane heaters, gas-powered stoves and charcoal grills while indoors. It can be a matter of life or death.”

Carbon Monoxide Safety

- Avoid using alternative heating sources such as portable generators, kerosene heaters, propane gas stoves and ovens heated with gasoline indoors because this can lead to carbon monoxide poisoning.

- Don’t use a generator, charcoal grill, camp stove or other gasoline or charcoal-burning device inside your home, basement, garage or near a window.

- Don’t run a car or truck inside a garage attached to your house, even if you leave the door open.

- Don’t burn items in a stove or fireplace that isn’t properly vented.

- Don’t heat your house with a gas oven.

- Don’t place a portable heater within reach of children or pets and don’t use a power strip or extension cord. Look for the Underwriter’s Laboratory (UL) label and carefully read instructions before use.

- Install carbon monoxide detectors in your home and replace batteries as required. If the detector sounds, leave your home immediately and dial 911.

- Seek immediate medical attention by calling 911 if you are experiencing symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning. Initial symptoms include headache, nausea, vomiting and fatigue. If recognized early, carbon monoxide poisoning is treatable.

- If you are experiencing symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning or if you have questions, call the Kentucky Poison Control hot line at (800) 222-1222.

Food Safety

- Refrigerated foods should be safe as long as power is out for no more than four hours.

- If an appliance thermometer was kept in the freezer, read the temperature when power comes back on. If the thermometer stored in the freezer reads 41 degrees Fahrenheit or below, the food is safe and may be refrozen.

- Throw out any perishable food in your refrigerator, such as meat, poultry, lunchmeats, fish, dairy products, eggs and any prepared or cooked foods that have been above 41 degrees Fahrenheit for four hours or more. If the food still contains ice crystals or is 41 degrees Fahrenheit or below, it is safe to refreeze.

- Fresh fruits and vegetables are safe as long as they are still firm and there is no evidence of mold or sliminess. Raw meats, poultry, cheese, juices, breads and pastries can be refrozen without losing too much food quality. Prepared food, fish, vegetables and fruits in the freezer can be refrozen safely, but food quality may suffer.

- To remove spills and freshen the freezer and refrigerator, DPH recommends washing with a solution of two tablespoons of baking soda dissolved in one quart of warm water. To absorb any lingering odors, place an open box or dish of baking soda in the appliance.



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