



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Wolf Administration Offers Winter Driving Resources, Safety Reminders

Harrisburg, PA – The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) today urged motorists to prepare their vehicles and take time to familiarize themselves with winter safety laws as part of Pennsylvania’s Winter Driving Awareness Week, which runs January 7-13.

“It is important for the public to think ahead and take a few simple steps before they travel,” Governor Tom Wolf said. “If they haven’t already, I urge all Pennsylvanians to be prepared for winter driving as the season continues.”

PennDOT Secretary Leslie S. Richards said that PennDOT recognizes Winter Driving Awareness Week to remind motorists that they are the department’s partners in winter road safety.

“Winter safety starts with all of us, and that includes the equipment we’re using,” Richards said. “Drivers should prepare their vehicles by having a trusted mechanic check the cooling system, battery, hoses, drive belts, tires and wiper blades to ensure they are in good condition and functioning properly.”

Drivers should also frequently check all fluid levels, lights and wiper blades as well as tires which should be also be examined often for the correct level of air pressure and adequate tire-tread depth to perform on ice and snow.

Finally, the traveling public should also prepare or restock a vehicle emergency kit. The kit should contain items such as non-perishable food, water, first-aid supplies, warm clothes, a blanket, cell phone charger and a small snow shovel. Motorists should tailor their kits to any specific needs that they or their families have such as baby supplies, extra medication and pet supplies.

Motorists should also be aware that all vehicles should be fully clear of ice and snow before winter travel. If snow or ice is dislodged or falls from a moving vehicle and strikes another vehicle or pedestrian causing death or serious bodily injury, the operator of that vehicle could receive a \$200 to \$1,000 fine.

When winter weather does occur, PennDOT asks drivers to be extra cautious around operating snow-removal equipment. When encountering a plow truck, drivers should:

- Stay at least six car lengths behind an operating plow truck and remember that the main plow is wider than the truck.
- Be alert since plow trucks generally travel much more slowly than other traffic.

- When a plow truck is traveling toward you, move as far away from the center of the road as is safely possible, and remember that snow can obscure the actual snow plow width.
- Never try to pass or get between several trucks plowing side by side in a "plow train." The weight of the snow thrown from the plow can quickly cause smaller vehicles to lose control, creating a hazard for nearby vehicles.
- Never travel next to a plow truck since there are blind spots where the operator can't see and they can occasionally be moved sideways when hitting drifts or heavy snowpack.
- Keep your lights on to help the operator better see your vehicle. Also remember that under Pennsylvania state law, vehicle lights must be on every time a vehicle's wipers are on due to inclement weather.

In addition to driving safely around plows, motorists are urged to drive according to conditions. If motorists encounter snow or ice-covered roads, they should slow down, increase their following distance and avoid distractions. Last winter in Pennsylvania, preliminary data shows that there were 252 crashes resulting in 129 injuries on snowy, slushy or ice-covered roadways where aggressive-driving behaviors such as speeding or making careless lane changes were factors.

To help make decisions as to whether to travel during winter weather, motorists are encouraged to "Know Before You Go" by checking conditions on more than 40,000 roadway miles, including color-coded winter conditions on 2,900 miles, by visiting www.511PA.com. 511PA, which is free and available 24 hours a day, provides traffic delay warnings, weather forecasts, traffic speed information and access to more than 850 traffic cameras. Users can also see plow truck statuses and travel alerts along a specific route using the ["Check My Route"](#) tool.

511PA is also available through a smartphone application for iPhone and Android devices, by calling 5-1-1, or by following regional Twitter alerts accessible on the 511PA website.

PennDOT has created a Winter Safety media center including social-media sized graphics highlighting winter driving preparations and operations at www.penndot.gov in the "Media Center" under the "Connect With Us" footer.

For more information on safe winter travel, an [emergency kit checklist](#) and information on PennDOT's winter operations including a [video](#), visit PennDOT.gov/winter. Additional winter driving and other highway safety information is available at PennDOT.gov/safety.

Follow the conversation by using #PAWinter on Twitter at www.twitter.com/PennDOTNews and like the department on Facebook at www.facebook.com/PennsylvaniaDepartmentofTransportation.

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