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Gov. Wolf Urges Motorists to Avoid Travel as Winter Weather Conditions Worsen

Harrisburg, PA – Governor Tom Wolf is urging motorists to avoid unnecessary travel and encouraging employers to offer telework options if possible, as winter weather conditions are expected to worsen Monday.

“As this winter storm continues, the best plan of action is to stay home,” Gov. Wolf said. “If you are required to travel, have all the proper safety precautions in place and stay alert for rapidly changing conditions.”

Vehicle restrictions are currently in place on several Pennsylvania interstates that align with [Tier 1 of the commonwealth’s weather event vehicle restriction plan](#), and the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) anticipates that additional restrictions will be added as conditions warrant. It is possible that a Tier 4 restriction could be enacted in the Harrisburg, Lehigh Valley and Pocono regions. Under a Tier 4 restriction, no commercial vehicles are permitted.

Motorists are encouraged to sign up for personalized alerts and find the latest restriction and travel information at www.511pa.com.

Strong wind and blowing/drifting snow are expected with this storm and reduced visibility is expected in some areas. Motorists always should be alert for sudden white-out conditions during the storm, virtually eliminating a driver’s visibility.

If travel is necessary, to help make decisions regarding winter travel, 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 1,000 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.

Motorists are reminded that roadways will not be free of snow while precipitation is falling. With freezing temperatures, roads that look wet may actually be icy, and extra caution is needed when approaching bridges and highway ramps where ice can form without warning.

If you must travel, slow down and increase your following distance. Most collisions in snowy and icy conditions are the result of driving too fast for the conditions or following too closely. Four-wheel drive may help with driving in the snow, but it does nothing to help with stopping, so leave plenty of room. And remember, speed limits are designed for ideal conditions. Drivers can be cited for driving too fast for the conditions, even below the speed limit.

Drivers should prepare or restock their emergency kits with 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 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.