



NEWS

RELEASE

VirginiaDOT.org

RELEASE: IMMEDIATE
CONTACT: Lou Hatter 540-829-7537
cell 540-717-2890
Lou.Hatter@VDOT.Virginia.gov

CULP 2009-005
Jan. 19, 2009

VDOT ADVISES CAUTION DURING TRAVEL OVERNIGHT Subfreezing temperatures, heavy traffic may create hazardous conditions

CULPEPER – Motorists should be alert for possible freezing conditions during their travels overnight Monday and on Tuesday morning throughout Central Virginia. Snow is expected in the area during the afternoon Monday and into the evening although minimal accumulation is forecast. While roads should remain clear of snow the pavement may be wet through the afternoon and evening.

Moisture on the roads combined with below freezing temperatures late Monday evening and Tuesday morning could cause patches of black ice to form, especially on bridges and overpasses as well as entrance and exit ramps, intersections and crossovers.

Motorists who must travel overnight, or who are traveling to Washington, D.C. for the Presidential Inauguration, should be aware of the possibility of freezing conditions as well as likely heavy traffic volumes and significant delays on interstates and primary highways beginning overnight Monday and lasting through Tuesday evening.

The Virginia State Police and Virginia Department of Transportation advise motorists traveling during this period to keep abreast of current traffic and weather conditions in the areas they are traveling through. VDOT has deployed significant resources, including mobile traffic cameras, message boards and the 511 telephone system and Web site, www.511Virginia.org, to provide real-time information to motorists traveling to the Washington region. In the Fredericksburg and Northern Virginia regions tune the car radio to 1620 AM to receive traffic information on the Highway Advisory Radio.

Crews from VDOT are on duty today throughout Central Virginia and will continue to monitor road conditions overnight Monday due to the possibility of localized freezing and slick road surfaces. Freezing conditions are most likely to occur in the western parts of the region and at higher elevations.

VDOT has mobilized maintenance and operations crews to prepare for the expected heavy traffic volumes associated with the Presidential Inauguration and other activities in Washington, D.C. In Central Virginia, Safety Service Patrols will travel extended routes on Interstates 64 and 66 as well as Route 29 from Charlottesville to I-66, Route 17 from Fredericksburg to I-81 and Route 28 in Fauquier County.

VDOT crews will patrol the region's roads to check for freezing conditions, especially near the Blue Ridge Mountains and on the mountain passes – Interstate 64 and Route 250 in Albemarle County, Route 33 in Greene County, Routes 211 and 522 in Rappahannock and I-66 and Route 50 in Fauquier County. Should conditions warrant the snowplows will treat bridges, mountain passes and other freeze-prone areas with a mix of sand and salt to improve traction and prevent sleet and freezing rain from sticking to the pavement.

VDOT offers the following tips for driving in winter weather:

- Make sure your windows, mirrors and lights are clear of ice and snow.
- Always wear your seat belt.
- Allow extra time to travel to your destination.
- Be aware of potentially icy areas such as bridges, overpasses and shady spots. Also, if there is heavy snow, ice or high winds, be alert to potential driving hazards including downed branches, trees and electric lines.
- Reduce speed as appropriate and keep a safe distance of at least five seconds behind other vehicles and snowplows.
- Do not pass a snowplow unless it is absolutely necessary. Remember, the plow is clearing a path for you.
- Keep an emergency winter driving kit in your car. The kit should include a small bag of rock salt, sand or cat litter to provide traction in case you get stuck, a snowbrush and ice scraper, a flashlight, battery booster cables, a blanket and extra clothing.
- Practice common sense. Remember that your car cannot start, stop, or turn as quickly and surely on snow or ice as it does on dry pavement, so think and drive accordingly.

Information about preparing for winter weather and other emergencies can be found at www.ReadyVirginia.gov. The National Weather Service, Virginia Department of Emergency Management, Virginia Department of Social Services and other state agencies have created the Ready Virginia resource to provide residents with a one-stop shop for emergency preparedness tips and information.

(END)

Note to reporters and editors: The 511 Virginia Web site, www.511Virginia.org, has links to current information about traffic conditions, weather, public transit access and recommended routes of travel to Washington, D.C. during the Inaugural events.

Additional information about VDOT's preparations for winter weather, how the agency responds to snow and ice, FAQs and information about the technology and tools VDOT uses in its winter weather response is available on the Web, <http://www.virginiadot.org/news/snowseason.asp>