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CITY OF CHICAGO

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**CITY OFFICIALS URGE CHICAGOANS TO PREPARE FOR COLD CONDITIONS IN  
UPCOMING WEEK**

As temperatures drop significantly overnight, the City of Chicago is urging residents to be prepared as the cold takes hold and be aware of City-offered services and tips to stay safe this winter. Those seeking access to warming centers and/or experiencing insufficient heat are being encouraged to contact 3-1-1 for immediate assistance.

"With winter weather approaching, we want to remind residents that the City is available to assist those in need of help with well-being checks and other cold-weather services," said Mayor Emanuel. "Chicagoans are no strangers to cold and snowy weather, and this season we must all again do our part to shovel sidewalks and look after our friends, family and neighbors in the event of extreme weather."

The City will continue to monitor conditions to prepare for and respond to extreme weather as early as possible.

"Bitter cold temperatures are more than an inconvenience, they pose a serious threat to health and safety," said OEMC Executive Director Alicia Tate-Nadeau. "As always, we encourage residents to take the necessary precautions to keep safe, including dressing appropriately for the weather and driving according to conditions."

The Chicago Department of Streets and Sanitation manages over 9,400 lane miles of roadway and maintains a fleet of over 300 snow vehicles, including 20 new trucks that have been serviced and staged in anticipation of snow fall. In addition, the Department has approximately 374,000 tons of salt stationed at salt piles throughout the city.

“Throughout the winter season, the Chicago Department of Streets and Sanitation’s team at Snow Command closely monitors the forecast each day, and plans for inclement weather,” said Acting Commissioner John Tully, Chicago Department of Streets and Sanitation. “The department is fully prepared to deploy snow plows as necessary to ensure streets are safe and passable for residents and motorists.”

### **Cold-Weather Tips**

Motorists should take extra precautions to winterize vehicles and have necessary supplies on-the-go. Keep in mind, disabled vehicles or distracted driving can cause accidents, impact traffic and others or requiring emergency services.

As many are out and about for the holiday season, it’s important to stay informed of changing conditions and heed warnings and advisories. Residents should know the signs and care of frostbite and hypothermia. Winter preparation information is available at [alertchicago.com](http://alertchicago.com) including links to other local, state and federal resources.

As the city braces for extremely cold conditions, the Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH) makes these simple suggestions to help keep residents safe:

- Avoid unnecessary trips outside-if you must go out, limit the time you stay outside;
- Wear several layers of loose, warm clothing;
- Keep your head, hands and feet covered when outdoors;
- Stay dry, because moisture can damage the insulating effectiveness of clothing;
- Pay extra attention to your daily needs: get enough sleep, eat high energy foods, drink warm beverages to help your body stay warm, and avoid alcoholic beverages;
- Recognize the symptoms of hypothermia: stiff muscles, shivering, puffy or swollen face, cold skin, slow breathing and mental confusion.
- If you go out into the cold, limit the time you stay outside. Break longer tasks into shorter ones, with indoor rest periods in between. Do not let children play outside for long periods of time.

Additionally, City officials encourage those seeking access to warming centers and/or experiencing insufficient heat, the City maintains a 24/7 network of sites (various social service agencies and select City facilities) that are available to residents in need of shelter. To connect to a location, residents can call 3-1-1 for immediate assistance.

### **Snow Tips**

Residents should be aware of City of Chicago Municipal Code in which every owner, lessee, tenant, occupant or other person having charge of any building or lot of ground abutting upon any public way or public space shall remove the snow and ice from the sidewalk. It is everyone’s responsibility to make sure the sidewalks are clear of snow and ice for everyone’s safety. We urge all to help senior or disabled neighbors with this effort. For more information, visit [www.cityofchicago.org/cdot](http://www.cityofchicago.org/cdot).

Motorists should also not impede snow plow operations and be sure to pull over for any emergency vehicles. Also, motorists should be aware of the city's snow route parking restrictions and overnight parking bans in areas and read signage before parking on city streets. See the Streets and Sanitation website for more details and additional information at [www.cityofchicago.org/dss](http://www.cityofchicago.org/dss).

Residents can also monitor the City's snow plows in real time on the Plow Tracker, [www.chicagoshovels.org](http://www.chicagoshovels.org).

### **Information for Homeowners and Renters**

The Chicago Heat Ordinance mandates that landlords supply heat to rental units during cold weather months. The Heat Ordinance mandates that during cold weather months, landlords supply heat to rental units or to any unit where owners do not have individual control of the heat. From September 15 through June 1, the temperature inside a rental residence is required to be at least 68 degrees from 8:30 a.m. to 10:30 p.m., and at least 66 degrees from 10:30 p.m. to 8:30 a.m.

Per the Heat Ordinance residents may contact 3-1-1 operators to file a heat complaint, which will signal an inspector from the Department of Buildings (DOB) to assess a caller's building and heating system immediately. Landlords face fines of up to \$500 per day, per violation, for each day they do not supply adequate heat. The reason for lack of heat does not matter -- landlords must follow the law, and apartments must be heated.

The Chicago Department of Water Management (DWM) encourages residents to act now to make sure pipes in homes are properly insulated and not exposed to freezing air. This includes pipes in garages and unheated areas of the home. If pipes do freeze, do not use candles or any open flame to thaw them; instead, use a hair dryer or heating pad.

The Chicago Fire Department (CFD) does not recommended using space heaters; however, if used, be sure they are UL certified and at least 3 feet from anything that can ignite. Use of a space heater in children's rooms should be monitored closely as children sometimes move them close to or into the bed with tragic results. If extension cords are used, they should be rated at 15 amps minimum and never put cords under carpet. With the added demand on furnaces and boilers, CFD also reminds residents are required by ordinance to have working carbon monoxide detectors to protect against carbon monoxide leaks from a heating system that could be fatal over time.

### **Information for Travelers, Public Transportation Users**

The Chicago Department of Aviation reminds those with travel plans through O'Hare or Midway International Airports to check their airline's website for flight status before going to the airport and to plan to arrive at least two hours in advance of a scheduled domestic flight, or three hours ahead for an international flight. Travelers are encouraged to check for updates by following O'Hare's Facebook page or Twitter account

@fly2ohare and Midway's Facebook page or Twitter account @fly2midway, in addition to their website, [www.FlyChicago.com](http://www.FlyChicago.com).

The Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) staff is extensively trained on handling winter weather operations and will, working closely with OEMC and other City agencies, carefully monitor weather and traffic conditions to quickly adapt transit operations to changing circumstances. What's more, CTA buses and rail system are equipped with features designed to mitigate the effects of cold temperatures and snow. CTA is also prepared to communicate timely service information to customers in the event of unplanned changes or significant delays in service through informational displays at rail stations and select bus stops; and through social media (Twitter and Facebook) and CTA's web site. CTA also encourages customers to sign up at [www.transitchicago.com](http://www.transitchicago.com) for free subscription service alerts to be notified of service changes or issues.

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