

Kansans Urged To Observe Safety Precautions For Winter Weather

Use caution when taking the first step out your door! Ice is accumulating on all surfaces across much of Kansas.

The temperatures are frigid and it's precipitating, a wintry combination that has resulted in hazardous driving and walking conditions.

A winter storm warning is in effect until noon for portions of central Kansas. Winter weather advisory is in effect until noon for east central Kansas, north central Kansas and northeast Kansas. The heaviest snow should fall mainly west of a Hiawatha to Council Grove line. Expect heaviest snow and blowing snow with total snow accumulations of 2 to 5 inches just west of Topeka. Wind blowing snow at 45 mph will reduce visibility though snow may not be as deep from Topeka eastward, a layer of ice is making travel treacherous.

The Kansas Division of Emergency Management is reminding Kansans that road travel is discouraged during extreme winter storm situations, particularly when there is an icy build-up on roads. However, if you must travel, there are some precautions you should take to keep yourself and your family safe.

Keep at least a half a tank of gas in your car at all times in case you get stranded or stuck in traffic. Arrange your travel plans to leave well ahead of bad weather and let someone know your itinerary and expected arrival time. Make sure your cell phone is charged so you can alert them should you be delayed.

Always keep an emergency kit in your car. Recommended items to include in your vehicle include:

- Water**
- Snack food**
- Shovel**
- Windshield scraper and small broom**
- Flashlight**
- Battery powered radio**
- Extra batteries**

- **Matches**
- **Extra hats, socks and mittens**
- **First aid kit with pocket knife**
- **Necessary medications**
- **Blanket(s)**
- **Tow chain or rope**
- **Road salt and sand**
- **Booster cables**
- **Emergency flares**
- **Fluorescent distress flag**

Information on winter driving tips is available from the Kansas Highway Patrol at <http://www.kansashighwaypatrol.org/259/Winter-Driving-Tips>. You can also follow the Kansas Highway Patrol on Facebook and Twitter at www.kansashighwaypatrol.org.

If you must travel, get the latest road information from the Kansas Department of Transportation by calling 5-1-1 or visiting the KanDrive website at kandrive.org. To find information on road conditions when not in the state, call 1-866-511-5368 < tel:1-866-511-5368 > .

For a complete list of items for a home or car emergency kit and for other helpful preparedness information, go to www.ksready.gov

Be sure your home is prepared, as well, with a home emergency kit that contains enough essential supplies to allow you to shelter in place for at least three days. Keep abreast of weather conditions by tuning to your local weather station.

If you have to work outside, observe the following safety precautions:

- **Use many thin, warm layers rather than a few thick layers. It will insulate better and allow you to strip off layers if the temperature climbs.**
- **Do not work alone, if possible. Working with a partner allows you to keep an eye on each other**

- **Work in short periods to avoid over-exertion**

Outdoor pets are especially vulnerable to bitter cold and extreme wind chills. Bring outdoor pets inside if possible or ensure that they have a draft-free enclosure with straw-type bedding that is large enough for your pets to lie down, but small enough to hold in body heat if they must remain outside. Always make sure that your pets have access to food and non-frozen water.

For additional pet safety information, go to avma.org <http://avma.org> and for general winter preparedness information, go to www.ksready.gov.