



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**MAYOR LIGHTFOOT, CITY OFFICIALS OUTLINE COMPREHENSIVE PLANS FOR
WINTER WEATHER OPERATIONS**

Collaborative City services are in effect each year to ensure the safety of Chicago residents and visitors

CHICAGO – Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot, along with the Office of Emergency Management and Communications (OEMC), Department of Streets and Sanitation (DSS), Department of Family and Support Services (DFSS), Peoples Gas, other City departments and sister agencies gathered today to remind residents about the City's available services during the winter months and provided residents with tips to stay safe during cold and inclement weather. The announcement happened at the City's new salt dome, located at 2555 W. Grand Ave.

"Just like we are each year, the City is fully prepared to manage winter operations and work together to provide the critical services our residents need to stay safe and warm," said Mayor Lightfoot. "Throughout the planning process, we've made sure City departments and agencies are well-equipped with the tools they need to fulfill this responsibility, including the new salt dome which will help make our streets safe and accessible during inclement weather."

Opened in 2021, the new 250' Diameter salt dome, built in partnership with the Department of Assets, Information and Services (AIS) and the Public Building Commission of Chicago (PBC) can store up to 60,000 tons of salt. This project was made possible partly by funding from the City's five-year capital plan, 'Chicago Works'.

The Office of Emergency Management and Communications (OEMC) coordinates the City of Chicago's response efforts to emergencies and works closely with the National Weather Service to monitor conditions throughout the year. In October, the OEMC hosted a Winter Weather Workshop with public safety and infrastructure departments, sister agencies and other partners to plan the coordination of operations for the winter months ahead.

"OEMC reminds residents to prepare now for the Winter season," said OEMC Executive Director Rich Guidice. "OEMC will continue to monitor conditions



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throughout the season and issue notifications to ensure that the public is informed of weather advisories and warnings. OEMC will also coordinate the City’s response during any emergencies and extreme weather conditions that may come our way. We are committed to working with departments citywide to assist residents and vulnerable populations heading into the winter season”

Office of Emergency Management and Communications

OEMC will keep the public informed when certain thresholds set by the National Weather Service are reached. These triggers are as follows:

- **Winter Weather Advisory:** *Potentially* dangerous winter weather is expected within the next 12-36 hours; Travel difficulties expected.
- **Winter Storm Warning:** *Dangerous* winter weather is expected in the next 12-36 hours or is occurring; Travel problems are expected.
- **Blizzard Warning:** *Severe* winter weather is expected in the next 12-36 hours or is occurring – including white out conditions. Do not travel.

Residents are advised to prepare for winter conditions for their family, home, and vehicles. Severe cold temperatures, strong winds and snow can cause additional hazards, whether home or traveling, so it’s important to stay informed. OEMC issues several alerts and notifications to keep people up to date on weather conditions and emergencies.

- **Notify Chicago:** Sign up for emergency alerts at www.NotifyChicago.org
- **CHILAKE:** For lakefront notices including flooding, TEXT “CHILAKE” to 7-8-0-1-5
- **COVID:** Get COVID-19 updates by TEXTING “COVID19” to 6-7-2-8-3
- **CHIBIZ:** Business updates, TEXT “CHIBIZ” to 6-7-2-8-3

This Winter, it’s important to create a Smart911 profile to provide 9-1-1 and first responders with emergency information specific to you and your household that can get you the help you need in an emergency. Profiles can include information on medical conditions, important household information, pets, emergency contacts, floor plans in case of a fire and more. Smart911 is a free and safe service. To create a profile, visit Smart911.com

For additional winter weather preparedness tips to keep you and your family safe, visit chicago.gov/oemc.

Department of Streets and Sanitation

The Department of Streets and Sanitation (DSS) manages more than 9,400 lane miles of roadway and maintains a fleet of over 300 snow vehicles, including 20 new



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spreaders and four front-end loaders, that are fully prepared to respond when needed. DSS also has 425,000 tons of salt stationed at salt piles throughout the city.

'Turn-By-Turn', DSS' state-of-the-art navigational software that provides turn-by-turn guidance to snowplow drivers, and tracks work completion in real time, is now fully implemented across all City routes for the first time this year.

Residents are also reminded that Chicago's annual winter Overnight Parking Ban is currently in effect. The ban, which begins this Wednesday, December 1, 2021, will be enforced through April 1, 2022, daily from 3:00 a.m. to 7:00 a.m., regardless of snow. The Overnight Parking Ban impacts approximately 107 miles of Chicago's streets and signage is permanently posted along the affected routes.

"The Overnight Parking Ban is just one of our many protocols in place to keep the city safe during the winter every year," said DSS Commissioner Cole Stallard. "While DSS is focused on its critical winter operations, we ask residents and visitors to be mindful of their speed while driving and to please follow the posted parking restriction signs so critical routes can be fully salted and plowed when it snows."

Cars parked in violation of the Overnight Parking Ban prevent critical routes from being fully plowed and salted when it snows. During a snowfall, a build-up of snow and ice next to parked vehicles on these routes further reduces traffic flow and can cause unsafe conditions.

Violators of the parking ban face a minimum \$150 towing fee, a \$60 ticket, and a storage fee of \$25 per day. Vehicles in violation will be towed to Pounds 2 (10301 S. Doty Ave) or 6 (701 N. Sacramento Ave.).

Chicagoans can visit www.chicagoshovels.org for a map of streets impacted by the ban, to view the City's snow plows in real-time during a storm. Motorists can also visit www.chicagoshovels.org or call 311 to find out if their vehicle was towed due to the ban.

Chicago Department of Public Health

As the City braces for cold temperatures and winter weather, the Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH) would like to caution residents to take care of themselves, and to also aid neighbors, family members, pets, and friends, particularly those who are elderly, have disabilities and/or live alone. Taking preventative action is the best way to stay safe from the serious health risks associated with winter weather. Residents are advised to limit their time outside,



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wear layers of warm clothing when going outside, and watch for signs of frostbite and hypothermia.

CDPH is also reminding residents that it's not too late to get a flu shot. The combination of flu and COVID-19 could overwhelm healthcare settings. We all need to do our part to prevent the spread of respiratory illnesses and help conserve potentially scarce health resources in hospitals already caring for COVID-19 patients. Residents can find flu shot locations at chicago.gov/flu.

Department of Family and Support Services Warming Areas

The Department of Family and Support Services (DFSS) activates warming areas at the City's six community service centers when temps are at 32 degrees or below.

- The warming areas are open Monday-Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
- On evenings, weekends or holidays, city-operated facilities including libraries and park facilities might also serve as warming areas, if needed.
- Residents must wear a face covering while in the warming areas.
- The Garfield Community Service Center at 10 South Kedzie, is open on a 24-hour basis to connect families and residents to emergency shelter.
- Those seeking a warm place to go after hours should call 3-1-1 to be connected with available services. Individuals requiring emergency overnight shelter should also call 3-1-1, visit 311.Chicago.gov or download the CHI311 app to ensure residents are aware of the City's designated warming areas. Residents are also encouraged to check on relatives, neighbors, and friends during a winter weather emergency.
- A list of community service center locations is available at Chicago.gov/FSS. Information and multilingual fliers containing warming center information in English, Spanish and Polish also are posted on DFSS's website at Chicago.gov/FSS.

Chicago Fire Department Winter Preparedness Safety Tips

The Chicago Fire Department does not recommend using space heaters; however, if used, they should be electric only. Residents are advised to never use propane or kerosene fired heaters in a home. Electric heaters should have a UL certification tag and be at least 3 feet from anything that can ignite, including furniture and bedding. 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. Residents are also advised to not use kitchen stoves or ovens for heat as this will cause a buildup of carbon monoxide.



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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. Those seeking access to warming centers and/or experiencing insufficient heat are encouraged to contact 3-1-1 for immediate assistance. Also, be sure to keep smoke detectors in working order. Residents are reminded that smoke detectors are also required by ordinance in Chicago for all homes.

Chicago Department of Aviation

In partnership with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and the airlines, the Chicago Department of Aviation (CDA) is prepared to maintain operations and keep passengers safe in winter weather conditions. Crews of over 500 staff are ready to support 24/7 operations on over 350 pieces of equipment and 5,000 tons of salt to keep runways and taxiways clear and safe at O'Hare and Midway International Airports. The expanded Central Deicing Facility at O'Hare streamlines operations and enhances safety at one of the busiest airports in the world that operates in snow conditions.

Those traveling through Chicago's airports are encouraged to visit www.flychicago.com to find real-time flight information, parking updates, taxicab wait times, available concession businesses and other special alerts for the traveling public. In addition, check airlines' websites for flight statuses and plan to arrive at least two hours in advance of a scheduled flight.

Department of Water Management

The Department of Water Management reminds residents to prevent frozen pipes, make sure that warm air is circulating throughout the home and keep a trickle of water running. If pipes freeze, do not use candles or any open flame to thaw them. Use a hair dryer or heating pad. For more info visit www.chicago.gov/water

National Weather Service

The National Weather Service in Chicago suggests keeping an eye on the forecast even 3-5 days out and consider how the expected conditions will impact you and how you can prepare. As winter weather develops and situations are updated, it's even more important to know what actions are needed when advisories and warnings are issued by the National Weather Service.

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Peoples Gas Cold Weather Tips

Peoples Gas advises that if you smell gas or think a gas line is damaged, leave the area immediately and call this number from a safe location: 866.556.6002

- Never use a stove or oven to heat your home. It could lead to carbon monoxide poisoning. Have your boiler/furnace inspected regularly and make sure all natural gas appliances have proper ventilation. Make sure you have working carbon monoxide detectors and test them regularly. Understand the dangers and symptoms of carbon monoxide. Keep the area around your furnace and water heater free of clutter and flammable items.
- Gently remove snow and ice from outside natural gas meters by hand or with a broom to avoid damage to the equipment. Remove overhead icicles to prevent dripping water from refreezing on your natural gas meters and pipes. Keep your walkway leading to the meter clear for accessibility in an emergency.
- Peoples Gas is here to help customers struggling to keep up with bills. Go to peoplesgasdelivery.com or call us to discuss flexible payment plans and budget billing. Income-eligible customers may also qualify for financial assistance. To see if you are eligible and apply, call the Community Economic Development Association (CEDA) at 800-571-2332, or go to cedarorg.net.

Additional 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.
- Residents should know the signs and care of frostbite and hypothermia. For Winter preparation information visit, Chicago.gov/OEMC/respond/weatherextremes
- including links to other local, state, and federal resources.
- 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 as moisture can damage the insulating effectiveness of clothing;



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- 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;

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