

MoDOT Getting Ready For Winter

JEFFERSON CITY – The chill in the air and the falling leaves mean winter weather will be here soon. To prepare, the Missouri Department of Transportation is stocking salt and preparing equipment to be ready when winter weather is here. To test our crews' readiness, MoDOT will hold a statewide drill on Thursday, Nov. 2.

The drill tests MoDOT's winter battle plan to ensure its readiness to get travelers back on Missouri roadways as quickly as possible after winter storms.

"Over 3,200 MoDOT employees are involved in our winter operations, including every maintenance crew across the state," said State Maintenance Engineer Becky Allmeroth. "The annual drill helps to make sure we all know our roles during a storm, and we can do our jobs successfully."

During the drill, MoDOT employees will react to a simulated forecast of significant snow for the entire state. The department's emergency operations centers will activate and maintenance employees will be deployed to MoDOT's 1,500 trucks. Emergency communications systems will also be tested.

"One of the most valuable parts of the drill is to measure our snowplow assignments by driving routes we may have modified since the previous winter season. As we open new roads and lanes we must modify our snow removal plans," said Allmeroth. "It also allows our newest snow fighters the opportunity to drive a snowplow over some of their proposed routes so they are aware of obstacles and obstructions that might be hidden in a storm by snow or ice such as curbs and raised islands."

Motorists may notice increased numbers of MoDOT vehicles on state routes during the drill. In rural areas, crews will deploy after 8 a.m. In urban areas, the drill will not begin until after 9 a.m. The exercise should be completed by 3 p.m.

The drill isn't the only element to MoDOT's winter weather operations. All maintenance employees complete an annual winter skills training that serves as a refresher course for plowing snow. The training assures that proper equipment operation, plowing techniques and safety measures are fresh on employees' minds as winter approaches. Every piece of equipment – every truck, motor grader, snow blower, and tractor – is inspected to ensure proper operation.

"Our ultimate goal is to handle the first snowfall like we've been plowing snow all year," said Allmeroth. "Careful planning and preparation mean our crews can mobilize when needed and our equipment will be ready."

The Missouri Department of Transportation annually spends an average of \$45 million to keep roads clear in the winter and help ensure motorists get to their destinations safely and quickly. For information on road conditions across the state, safe traveling tips, and other winter weather information, visit www.modot.org.

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