



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR  
CITY OF CHICAGO

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**CONTACT:**

Mayor's Press Office

312.744.3334

[press@cityofchicago.org](mailto:press@cityofchicago.org)

Melissa Stratton | OEMC

312.746.9454

Molly Poppe | DSS

312.339.5524

**MAYOR EMANUEL, CITY DEPARTMENTS  
REMINDE RESIDENTS TO TAKE PRECAUTIONS DURING COLD WEATHER**

Mayor Rahm Emanuel, along with officials from the Office of Emergency Management and Communications (OEMC), Department of Streets and Sanitation (DSS), other City departments and sister agencies, today reminded residents about City-offered services during the winter months and provided residents with tips to avoid weather and health emergencies during cold and extreme weather.

"Last winter, we had the third snowiest winter on record, but we proved that no matter the conditions outside, Chicago can weather the storm," said Mayor Emanuel. "As we brace for cold temperatures, City departments are prepared to clear snow from streets and perform well being checks, but we also ask residents to help prepare for winter, check on their neighbors during extreme temperatures and call for assistance when necessary."

OEMC urges residents to prepare for cold temperatures and snowy conditions throughout the winter by taking steps, such preparing emergency kits for residences and vehicles and stocking up on necessities, which will help in emergency situations or if weather conditions become dangerous.

"Dealing with extreme weather is not just preparing for an emergency situation, but also having a plan of action to respond and recover from that situation, which is why the City prepares well in advance with Citywide planning exercises to ensure the safety of residents should conditions change," said OEMC Executive Director Gary Schenkel. "As always, we remind residents to be cognizant of weather conditions, take steps to limit their exposure when possible, and to call 311 to be connected to City services for assistance."

The City of Chicago works with AccuWeather to monitor the weather on an on-going basis to prepare for extreme weather as early as possible should it occur, and continues to implement, coordinate and improve plans to adapt to changing conditions to keep residents safe during the winter season.

121 NORTH LASALLE STREET, ROOM 507, CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60602

DSS manages snow removal for more than 9,400 lane miles of roadway and maintains a fleet of more than 280 snow removal vehicles, including 19 new snow plows and four new, smaller 4x4 snow plows for this winter. The City will begin the winter season with approximately 400,000 tons of salt stationed at 19 salt piles across the City. DSS monitors snow removal operations, road conditions and weather from the Snow Command center through access to over 1,400 citywide camera feeds, Doppler radar control, and atmospheric and road data sensors.

"The Department of Streets and Sanitation has been preparing for the upcoming winter season since the spring by training drivers and supervisors, preparing the snow removal fleet, and receiving shipments of road salt," said DSS Commissioner Charles Williams. "We are ready for this snow season, and our snow removal team is ready to respond quickly and effectively to all winter weather scenarios."

This winter season, DSS and the Department of Innovation and Technology (DoIT) have improved communication with residents around snow removal operations through the online Plow Tracker tool. Residents will continue to be able to watch snow removal operations as plows began on main and arterial streets and then move to neighborhood streets once the snow has stopped. New this year, residents can view the direction of travel for all snow removal vehicles in real-time. Residents will also be able to view snowfall totals for each snow system and for the entire winter season.

### **Parking Restrictions and Overnight Bans**

Motorists are advised that Chicago's annual winter Overnight Parking Ban is now in effect and will be enforced through Tuesday, March 31, 2015 from 3:00AM to 7:00AM, regardless of snow. 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 next to parked vehicles on these routes further reduces traffic flow.

The Overnight Parking Ban impacts more than 100 miles of Chicago's streets and signage is permanently posted along the impacted streets. Violators will face a minimum \$150 towing fee, a \$60 ticket and a storage fee of \$20 per day for the first five days. Vehicles in violation of the ban will be towed to Pounds 2 (10301 S. Doty Ave) or 6 (701 N. Sacramento).

### **Information for Homeowners, Renters**

Officials reminded residents to be cognizant of weather conditions, heed the warnings given by experts, and recognize the implications of wind chill advisories, winter storm watches and warnings. Residents should know the signs and care of frostbite and hypothermia. Winter preparation information is available at [www.alertchicago.com](http://www.alertchicago.com), including links to other local, state and federal resources.

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. Use a hair dryer or heating pad.

The Chicago Heat Ordinance mandates that landlords supply heat to rental units during cold weather months. From September 15 to June 1, the temperature inside a rental residence must be at least 68 degrees during the day. During the evening, the temperatures must be at least 66 degrees. The Department of Buildings encourages residents to first contact their landlords when these temperatures are not maintained and to call 3-1-1 if no action is being taken. During extreme cold weather, however, the Building Department's first priority is responding to heat complaints and it reassigns inspectors to handle the increased number of heat complaints.

Since September 15th, the Department of Buildings has completed 3,422 no heat inspections, referred 157 buildings to Administrative Hearings and referred 178 buildings to the Department of Law to process for Circuit Court. To date, 114 court cases have been filed by the Department of Law, impacting 887 residential units and a Heat Receiver has been appointed for 33 properties, impacting 149 residential units.

The Chicago Fire Department (CFD) does not recommend 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.

In heavy snow, CFD asks that residents shovel around hydrants so they can find them and hook a hose up faster in the event of a fire. Don't park within 15 feet of hydrants - the house you save could be your own.

Through [www.ChicagoShovels.org](http://www.ChicagoShovels.org), individuals can sign up to volunteer with the Snow Corp program which helps to pair volunteers with senior residents or people with disabilities who require assistance to shovel their sidewalks.

To help manage energy costs and ensure residential safety, Peoples Gas reminds Chicagoans about the following:

- [Financial assistance is available and those seeking assistance with their winter bills are encouraged to apply early for grants to help with heating costs.](#)
- Winter proof homes by covering windows with plastic sheeting, applying weather stripping around doors, insulating hot water pipes and installing programmable thermostats. These weatherization measures are important tools during the heating season to help manage energy costs.
- Have appliances serviced by qualified contractor. Keep heating, ventilation and metering equipment free from debris, snow & ice. Ensure natural gas appliances are correctly flued and have the correct ventilation to avoid carbon monoxide build up in living areas. Check/Install carbon monoxide detectors.

In addition, OEMC encourages residents to keep an emergency kit at home and on-the-go and to keep informed of weather conditions throughout the season. For more winter weather

preparedness tips, visit [www.AlertChicago.com](http://www.AlertChicago.com) and to receive Chicago emergency and non-emergency notifications, register at [www.NotifyChicago.org](http://www.NotifyChicago.org).

In 2014, Mayor Emanuel and Peoples Gas announced a doubling of funding for Share the Warmth, a financial assistance program that helps low-income families pay their heating bills. The City and Peoples Gas are providing \$1 million in funding for the Share the Warmth program, enough to assist 5,000 families with their heating bills.

Peoples Gas is partnering with the Community Economic and Development Association (CEDA) and ComEd in hosting several utility assistance and community resource fairs to support those residents who are looking for help paying their energy bills.

The first fair is this Saturday, January 10, at Malcolm X College, 1900 W. Van Buren St. from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Representatives from Peoples Gas, CEDA and ComEd will be on site, along with a number of city, state and human services agencies, to provide information on programs and resources that are available to assist residents. CEDA will take applications on site for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) and the Peoples Gas Share the Warmth program.

### **Warming Centers**

The Department of Family and Support Services (DFSS) operates six Community Service Centers located throughout the city that double as warming centers during work weekdays when temperatures dip below 32 degrees. These Community Service Centers are open from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Out of an abundance of caution during this first extended period of very cold weather, warming centers will be kept open later than normal and will be open until 8 pm. One of these facilities, the Garfield Community Service Center at 10 South Kedzie, is open on a 24-hour basis to connect residents to emergency shelters. DFSS will monitor the weather and make operational decisions regarding warming center hours based on weather conditions and other circumstances in coordination with OEMC.

“During the extreme cold we ask the public to help us by checking in on older and frail neighbors or relatives, particularly those with disabilities, poor health or those who may be isolated from friends and family,” said DFSS Commissioner Evelyn Diaz.

On evenings, weekends or holidays, City-operated facilities including libraries, park facilities and police stations might also serve as warming centers if they are needed. And during the weekdays, DFSS also operates the City’s six Regional Senior Centers and 15 Satellite Senior Centers where seniors can go to keep warm in addition to taking part in numerous activities. Those seeking a warm place to go after hours should call 3-1-1. Seniors or individuals with limited mobility may call 3-1-1 to request a ride to any of the centers. And individuals requiring emergency overnight shelter, or transportation to a shelter, should also call 3-1-1.

Links to warming center information and flyers in English, Spanish and Polish are posted on DFSS's website and Facebook pages at [www.cityofchicago.org/fss](http://www.cityofchicago.org/fss) and [www.facebook.com/chicagoDFSS](http://www.facebook.com/chicagoDFSS).

### **Chicago Public Schools**

Chicago Public Schools (CPS) has a comprehensive snow removal plan created by working directly with each school that, depending on the size of the school, relies upon custodians, engineers and contractors to clear sidewalks, walkways and parking lots.

CPS successfully handled the historic winter last year, and has updated winter weather protocol this year to again ensure all students and school personnel have a warm, comfortable and safe learning environment.

Classes for all CPS students resumed Monday following winter break. In preparation, the District's maintenance crews tested all equipment to ensure heating systems are working. As always, CPS will monitor weather conditions throughout the season to make determinations in the event of dangerous or subzero temperatures and will inform parents if classes are cancelled.

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

The Chicago Department of Aviation (CDA) 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 their scheduled flight. When severe weather causes significant delays and cancellations at the airports, travelers can receive airport-wide delay and cancellation updates by calling the CDA Media Relations Office at (773) 686-3700 and pressing 1, or by following O'Hare's Facebook page or Twitter account @fly2ohare and Midway's Facebook page or Twitter account @fly2midway.

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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