

From: Governor's Press Office [Governor'sPressOffice@eog.myflorida.com]
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CONTACT: GOVERNOR'S PRESS OFFICE
(850) 717-9282
media@eog.myflorida.com

Gov. Scott Urges North Florida Families to Prepare for Severe Cold Weather

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. – Today, following a briefing by the Florida Division of Emergency Management (FDEM), Governor Rick Scott urged Florida residents, visitors and businesses in North Florida to prepare for extreme cold weather conditions, including potential snow, sleet or ice accumulations, as a severe weather system moves into the area tonight. The National Weather Service has issued Winter Storm Watches and Winter Weather Advisories for Baker, Columbia, Dixie, Gilchrist, Hamilton, Jefferson, Lafayette, Madison, Nassau, Suwannee, Taylor and Union Counties. Additional counties in the Florida Panhandle may also be included in these advisories later today.

Governor Scott said, "In Florida, you should always be prepared for potential severe weather, regardless of the time of year. As this weather system moves through state, families and visitors across North Florida should prepare for potential hard freezes and below-freezing travel conditions. Floridians should closely monitor local media outlets for updates and important information. The state is working closely with local partners in North Florida to keep Floridians safe, and will continue to closely monitor weather conditions."

Governor Scott directed the following state actions in preparation for the severe weather:

Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT)

- FDOT crews will conduct winter weather operations by spraying state roads and bridges later tonight and into the early hours of Wednesday ahead of freezing temperatures.
- Spraying will consist of a saline solution that is designed to lower the freezing temperature of the precipitation falling on the bridge surfaces.
- Motorists may notice an increased number of FDOT vehicles on state routes as FDOT maintenance and operations staff monitor winter weather conditions on bridges and roadways.

Florida Highway Patrol (FHP)

- FHP troops A (Pensacola), B (Gainesville), G (Jacksonville) and H (Tallahassee) will be on 12-hour shifts monitoring any impacted roadways in coordination with FDOT.

- FHP Quick Reaction Force teams from other areas in the state also remain on standby if additional highway safety needs arise in winter storm-impacted areas.
- Motorists should dial *FHP (347) from their mobile phone if they are on the road and need assistance.

Florida Department of Health (DOH)

- State Surgeon General Dr. Celeste Philip held a call to discuss preparations with county health officers in impacted areas.
- This cold snap could trigger increased risk of Carbon Monoxide poisonings and home fires due to incorrect usage of generators and heaters. Watch this [#FLHealthMinute](#) video to learn about Generator Safety.
- DOH staff is prepared and on standby to staff special needs shelters if needed.

Florida Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA)

- The Agency for Health Care Administration will host a call today with administrators, owners and CEOs of nursing homes, assisted living facilities, and related associations in affected areas of the state to ensure health care facilities are preparing for inclement weather and monitoring conditions.

Florida Department of Education (DOE)

- DOE is monitoring any potential school closures across Florida.

Florida Department of Management Services (DMS)

- DMS is monitoring and will advise regarding any potential government building closures.

If severe weather threatens your area, be sure to follow these important safety tips:

- Ensure your NOAA All-Hazards Weather Radio is on and programmed for your area or stay tuned to a trusted local media outlet for the most current weather situation.
- Ensure your disaster supply kit is prepared and heed all instructions from local officials.
- Pay attention to warnings issued & remember the 5P's of cold weather safety - protect people, pets, plants, pipes and practice fire safety.

Shelters

- The following counties have or are planning to open cold weather shelters in anticipation of this event:
 - Escambia, Santa Rosa, Okaloosa, Walton, Leon, Columbia, Gadsden, Liberty, Wakulla, Suwannee, Clay, Duval Hillsborough, Citrus, Pasco, Brevard, Indian River, Martin, Osceola, Seminole, St. Lucie and Volusia.

*Individuals should contact their local emergency management office for the best information regarding shelter availability.

For more information and tips from the Florida Division of Emergency Management, visit www.FloridaDisaster.org or follow @FLSERT on Twitter.

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