



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **PennDOT Reviews Preparations for Coming Winter**

*Visit [511PA.com](http://www.511PA.com) to Check Road Conditions before Leaving Home*

**Norristown, PA** – With snow already visiting some areas of Pennsylvania, PennDOT Secretary Leslie S. Richards today outlined the agency’s plans for winter services and encouraged drivers to be prepared as well.

“Our residents count on PennDOT to keep them moving regardless of the weather and we take that mission very seriously,” Richards said during a news conference at the PennDOT maintenance facility in Norristown, Montgomery County. “We have our materials and equipment in place and our staff of dedicated equipment operators, district-level staff and staff in Maintenance and Operations are ready to go.”

This winter, all of the more than 2,200 PennDOT-owned and rented plow trucks will be equipped with AVL technology — meaning the public can view the trucks on interstates and expressways this winter at [www.511PA.com](http://www.511PA.com). PennDOT started the AVL program in 2014 in 119 plow trucks and expanded it to more than 700 trucks last winter. The AVL unit in each truck sends a cellular signal through the system showing where a truck is located and whether or how much material is being spread from the truck.

The AVL system is part of Governor Wolf’s GO-TIME initiative that leverages inter-agency coordination and collaboration to maximize efficiency, modernize state government operations, and provide the highest quality services.

The Secretary noted that PennDOT has compiled all of its information about winter series into a special page on the web site at:

<http://www.penndot.gov/TravelInPA/Winter/Pages/default.aspx>

The site also has a complete winter guide with detailed information about winter services in each of PennDOT’s 11 engineering districts.

With \$205 million budgeted for statewide winter operations, PennDOT deploys about 4,800 on-the-road workers and has more than 768,000 tons of salt on hand across the state.

The state’s snow plow trucks are equipped with computerized salt spreaders that allow operators to calibrate the exact amount of salt to be distributed regardless of the speed of the truck.

“Our equipment operators have an enormous amount of responsibility during a storm as they plow snow, monitor computers that control the flow of salt, monitor pavement temperatures, and keep their eyes on traffic and possible roadside obstacles,” Richards said. “We urge drivers to

allow plenty of space to snow plow operators so they can perform their jobs effectively and safely.”

When winter weather hits, PennDOT’s primary focus is on interstates and expressways, and equipment may be redirected to those routes during significant winter events. The more traffic a roadway has, the more attention it will receive from plows, so motorists may find deeper accumulations on less-traveled routes and should adjust their driving for those conditions.

In addition to planning for traffic impacts, Richards noted that vehicle preparation is critical to safe winter travel.

If motorists encounter snow or ice-covered roads, they should slow down, increase their following distance and avoid distractions. Last winter in Pennsylvania, preliminary data shows that there were 224 crashes resulting in 103 injuries on snowy, slushy or ice-covered roadways where aggressive-driving behaviors such as speeding or making careless lane changes were factors.

Tires should also be checked often for the correct level of air pressure and adequate tire-tread depth to perform on ice and snow. A quick way to check tread depth is to insert a penny in the tread groove with Lincoln’s head upside down. If you can see the entire head, the tires are worn and traction will suffer. If you live in an area prone to heavy snow, drivers may want to consider using dedicated snow tires or carrying a set of tire chains. At a minimum, all-season tires should be rated for use in mud and snow.

Once vehicles are travel-ready, drivers should be prepared for winter or vehicle emergencies especially if long-distance travel is planned. PennDOT urges motorists to carry an emergency kit.

An emergency kit should include items such as non-perishable food, water, first-aid supplies, warm clothes, a blanket, cell phone charger and a small snow shovel. However, motorists should tailor their kits to any specific needs that they or their families may have. Consider adding such items as baby supplies, extra medication, pet supplies, or even children's games. For more information on PennDOT's winter preparations and additional winter-driving resources for motorists, visit the department's winter Web page, [www.PennDOT.gov/winter](http://www.PennDOT.gov/winter).

Motorists can check conditions on more than 40,000 roadway miles, including color-coded winter conditions on 2,900 miles, by visiting [www.511PA.com](http://www.511PA.com). 511PA, which is free and available 24 hours a day, provides traffic delay warnings, weather forecasts, traffic speed information, and access to more than 800 traffic cameras.

511PA is also available through a smartphone application for iPhone and Android devices, by calling 5-1-1, or by following regional twitter alerts accessible on the 511PA website.

For more PennDOT information, visit [www.penndot.gov](http://www.penndot.gov). Follow PennDOT information on Twitter at [www.twitter.com/PennDOTNews](http://www.twitter.com/PennDOTNews) and follow the department on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/pennsylvaniadepartmentoftransportation](http://www.facebook.com/pennsylvaniadepartmentoftransportation) and Instagram at [www.instagram.com/pennsylvaniadot](http://www.instagram.com/pennsylvaniadot).

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