



News Release

Arizona Department of Public Safety

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Arizona Department of Public Safety Advises of Major Storm to hit Arizona and Offers Safety Tips to Motorists

The Arizona Department of Public Safety (DPS) is requesting all motorists traveling on Arizona highways to exercise care and caution and they travel during the 2008 Christmas Holiday time period.

The National Weather Service has advised that a strong winter snow storm will be moving into Arizona on Wednesday, December 24 and will probably intensify on Christmas Day, December 25. The winter storm will affect several parts of the state with heavy snowfall projected at 12-24 inches in elevations above 6000 feet and producing rain in lower elevations. The increasing cold temperatures may drop the snow level to 4000 for some areas. In addition, the storm may produce wind gusts up to 40 M.P.H. which when combined with either snow or rain creates poor visibility for motorists traveling on Arizona’s public highways.

The snow, ice and slippery roadway advisories are for Mohave, Yavapai, Coconino, Navajo, Apache, Gila, Graham, Greenlee, Cochise and Maricopa (Northern section) Counties. All other Central and Southern Arizona Counties can expect rain and possibly freezing rain depending on the cold temperatures and elevation.

DPS is prepared with department-wide resources to provide a timely response to collisions, medical emergencies, slide-offs and disabled motorists. The Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) has updated it Web site for Road and Weather information. To see what has been updated please visit:

<http://www.dot.state.az.us/ccpartnerships/news/nrel2238.asp>

The Motorist Safety Tips are listed on Page 2.

DPS is requesting the motoring public to exercise due care, safety, alertness and caution when driving on Arizona's highways. Please use the following safety tips for motorists while traveling on Arizona's roadways during this time period of challenging inclement weather:

- ❖ Plan your travel route, check for the latest road, weather conditions and statewide emergency conditions by using the below resources:
<http://www.az511.com> <http://www.azdot.gov> <http://www.az211.gov>
or by telephone by **Dialing "5-1-1"**
- ❖ Carry plenty of food/water and other provisions (medicines, etc).
- ❖ Carry a fully charged cellular phone.
- ❖ Try to travel with plenty of fuel for your vehicle.
- ❖ Slow down your travel speed to maintain control of the vehicle on slippery road surfaces, maintain extended following distances to other vehicles.
- ❖ Slow down your travel speed when experiencing strong winds and gusts. An advisory especially for any high-profile vehicle.
- ❖ Remember strong winds and gusts when combined with snow, sleet or rain will produce poor driver visibility.
- ❖ Do not conduct any panic braking or steering, which will cause loss of vehicle control.
- ❖ Travel with headlamps on for day and nighttime lighting conditions for better visibility of your vehicle.
- ❖ Be patient and expect travel delays, road closures and traffic re-routing.
- ❖ Be alert to watch for DPS Officers, ADOT Personnel providing traffic control, assistance to disabled motorist or working multiple incident scenes.
- ❖ Read all Warning Signs.
- ❖ Be alert to quickly changing weather and deteriorating road conditions.
- ❖ Be advised that many areas may be restricted to snow chains or four-wheel drive vehicles only for continued travel.
- ❖ Refrain from all distracting activities for drivers; no texting, no cellular phone usage (except emergency phone calls), or not performing any other distracting behavior that will divert the driver from focusing 100 per cent on safe driving.
- ❖ Do not stop on or near any public highway to take photographs or to enjoy the snow.
- ❖ If you must stop due to a disabled vehicle, make all attempts to get the vehicle completely off the travel lanes and off the roadway surface to the right side of the road if possible.
- ❖ Be aware that other vehicles may drive into a disabled vehicle stopped on or near the travel lanes.

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The mission of the Arizona Department of Public Safety, the most dynamic state-level law enforcement agency in United States, is to protect human life and property by enforcing state laws, deterring criminal activity, assuring the safety of the motoring public on Arizona's highways and providing vital scientific, technical and operational support to other criminal justice agencies. The Department, also one of Arizona's largest law enforcement agencies with some 2,200 sworn and civilian employees, consists of four divisions – Highway Patrol, Criminal Investigations, Criminal Justice Support and Agency Support. The Department is headquartered in Phoenix with offices located in more than 30 communities within Arizona's 15 counties.