

Press Release

Governor Declares State of Emergency as North Carolina Prepares for Winter Storm

Snow and ice could cause power outages, dangerous driving conditions

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Raleigh, N.C. - Governor Pat McCrory is urging North Carolinians to prepare for winter weather and monitor local forecasts as the state's first significant winter storm moves in later today. McCrory will activate the State Emergency Response Team today and has declared a State of Emergency to prepare for expected snow and ice accumulations over the next 36 to 48 hours.

“Given the snow and ice accumulations that are predicted, combined with gusty winds and already saturated grounds, this storm has serious potential,” said Governor McCrory. **“Ice accumulations of one quarter inch or more can weaken tree limbs and lead to downed power lines. Needless to say, we’re watching this storm very carefully.”**

Wednesday's cold front brought two to four inches of snow to the mountains, while portions of central North Carolina saw a trace of snow. The storm system moving into the state later today is expected to bring another eight to 18 inches of snow across much of the mountains; four to eight inches of snow plus one quarter inch of ice across the Triad; one to four inches of snow plus one quarter to one half inch of ice across the Triangle; and two to four inches of snow with an additional one quarter to four-tenths inch of ice in the Charlotte region. Eastern and coastal counties are expected to get mostly rain with perhaps a mix of freezing rain.

The wintery conditions caused two weather-related fatalities late Wednesday. A Forsyth County woman died after she lost control of her car on a sleet and snow-covered road and struck another vehicle head on. In Stokes County, a woman died after she lost control of her car on a snow-covered road and ended up in a creek.

“As we’ve already seen, these conditions can be treacherous,” said Department of Public Safety Secretary Frank L. Perry. “If you can stay off the roads when the frozen precipitation begins, please do. If you must be out, we can’t overemphasize the importance of following safe driving tips.”

Governor McCrory said state agencies began preparing for the storm Tuesday. North Carolina Emergency Management has been working with counties to assess and mobilize resources and state transportation crews have been treating roadways. Already, NCDOT crews have spread more than 1.1 million gallons of brine, a salt and water solution which prevents ice from bonding to the roadways.

Other state preparations include:

- All state highway patrol troopers activated or on standby
- 15 teams of National Guard soldiers in Humvees are positioned across western and central North Carolina to assist stranded motorists
- Chain saw crews are on standby to quickly clear blocked roadways
- NCDOT has staged extra equipment and personnel near typical travel trouble spots along I-77 in Surry County; I-40 in McDowell County and I-26 in Polk and Henderson counties.

Late Wednesday, the governor signed a State of Emergency declaration and issued executive orders waiving certain vehicle weight and service hour requirements. Executed under the Emergency Management Act, the State of Emergency declaration enables the governor to mobilize the necessary resources to respond to a storm. It also is the first step in seeking federal funds to help defray the cost of providing emergency services, clearing debris and repairing any damaged public infrastructure. The executive order waives restrictions on weight and the hours of service for fuel, utility and other truck

drivers that may be working to deliver supplies, restore services or clear debris in response to the winter storm. Both orders are in effect for 30 days but could be canceled earlier if conditions warrant.

“Our state agencies are ready for this winter storm,” said North Carolina Emergency Management Director Mike Sprayberry. “We need North Carolinians to partner with us in storm preparation by getting their emergency supply kits together, fueling their vehicles and gathering needed heating supplies.”

More information about storm response and recovery efforts can be found on www.ReadyNC.org or by following @NCEmergency on Facebook and Twitter. Real-time information about weather and road conditions and other emergency preparedness actions can be found via the free ReadyNC mobile app.

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