

NEWS



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Philadelphia Activates the Emergency Operations Center for the Snow Emergency

PHILADELPHIA, PA – In response to the Snow Emergency declared at 9:00 p.m. on Tuesday, February 9, Mayor Michael A. Nutter activated the City's Emergency Operations Center at 4:00 a.m. Wednesday morning in order to monitor the storm.

Agencies in the Emergency Operations Center include: Philadelphia Police Department, Fire Department, Streets Department, Licenses and Inspections, Philly 3-1-1, Philadelphia Water Department, Philadelphia Gas Works, Office of Fleet Management, Office of Support Housing, Fairmount Park Commission, Pennsylvania State Police, Pennsylvania Department of Transportation, Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency, Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority, Philadelphia Parking Authority, Salvation Army, and the Delaware Valley Health Council.

All Philadelphia Schools, Courts and City offices are closed on Wednesday, February 10, including libraries, recreation and health centers.

Residents are reminded that all vehicles parked on Snow Emergency Routes must be moved to an alternate parking location. Any vehicle remaining on a Snow Emergency Route during the declared Snow Emergency will be ticketed and towed. A list of snow emergency routes can be found at http://www.phila.gov/streets/snow_emergency.html. For citizens that need a space for their car, the Philadelphia Parking Authority's "snow rate" of \$5.00 for 24 hours will be in effect until 7:00 a.m. Friday morning at Center City garages.

Philadelphia Streets Department salt and plow crews have been deployed throughout the City to respond to the precipitation. Crews will remain on duty to monitor roadways and to respond to problem locations and emergencies. As a result, trash and recycling pickup is cancelled for Wednesday.

"Do not park cars illegally or illegally plow snow on to public streets, said Streets Commissioner Clarena I. W. Tolson, "especially around some of the smaller streets in South Philadelphia, as this will hinder our

ability to clear the roads.”

Streets Commissioner Tolson urges residents to follow these tips:

- Clear a sidewalk path at least 30” wide within 6 hours of the end of the storm as listed in the Philadelphia Code (10-720).
- Be conscious of the environment – use de-icing salts only as much as needed. One pound of de-icer can cover 100 to 200 square feet.
- De-icer should be applied as soon as a light accumulation has developed on the surface. This will break the bond between additional accumulations and the pavement surface, and will make it easier to shovel.
- A final light application of a de-icer may be required after removal is completed to melt the residual snow.
- Make sure you park your car as far away from the corner as possible. Cars parked too close to the corner limit the turning radius of salting vehicles.
- Clear snow from neighborhood storm drains to allow melting snow to drain.
- Make sure firefighters will have easy access to fire hydrants by clearing snow around the hydrants.
- Stay tuned to local media for updates.
- To report a street in need of salting or plowing or for more information on any Streets Department program or service, call 3-1-1. You may also visit the Streets Department on-line at http://www.phila.gov/streets/snow_emergency.html.

In addition, the City’s Office of Supportive Housing declared a Code Blue to provide support to the homeless. If you see a homeless person in need of assistance, please call the Homeless Outreach Coordination Center at 215-232-1984.

With another major snowstorm in a matter of days, Health Commissioner Donald F. Schwarz reminded Philadelphians to take precautionary measures to protect themselves and their neighbors from injuries and accidents common in winter weather.

Dr. Schwarz recommends:

- Eat nourishing meals. Food adds fuel the body needs to keep warm.
- Wear several loose fitting layers of clothing. Avoid tight clothing. Wool and most synthetic fabrics are warmer than cotton.
- Keep clothes dry. Change wet socks or long underwear.
- Wear a windproof outer layer of clothing.
- Wear a hat that covers the ears.

Dr. Schwarz urges the public to check in on older friends, relatives, and neighbors before and during a snowstorm, to check on the availability of heat in the home, to offer transportation, and to help with running errands such as grocery shopping.

“Those not used to regular exercise should work slowly and be cautious because shoveling snow is a high intensity exercise,” said Dr. Schwarz. “Senior citizens and others with back problems or heart conditions should refrain from physical exertion like shoveling snow, or walking long distance. It is also important for everyone to avoid alcoholic beverages during cold weather.”

Those at higher risk for heart attacks from snow shoveling include smokers, individuals with high “bad” cholesterol, high blood pressure or diabetes.

The health department recommends the following snow shoveling tips:

- Warm up with some stretching exercises inside.
- Start slowly and pace yourself. Shovel no more than five loads a minute; don't shovel for more than 15 minutes without taking a break. Pause to stretch every five minutes by standing up straight.
- Push the snow. Don't lift. If you must lift, use your legs not your back.
- Drink during breaks to avoid dehydration. Breathing cold dry air robs moisture from your body with every breath.

- Never throw over your shoulder. Twisting can strain the back. Face the snow being shoveled, keep your back straight and knees bent and throw in front of you.
- Dress warmly in layers with a hat. Cover your neck.
- Take smaller scoops of snow, keeping them light and small.
- Don't work up a sweat. Bodies lose heat faster in damp clothes, which makes you more prone to injury. Take a break if you're beginning to sweat.
- Don't smoke or eat a heavy meal before shoveling. It's harder on the heart.
- Don't hold your breath; this makes your heart rate and blood pressure rise. Don't feel the job has to get done in one session.
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In an emergency, call 911, or go to an emergency room. Until medical help arrives, protect someone suffering from exposure to the cold with extra blankets and clothing.

For additional information or updates on the storm, visit the Office of Emergency Management's website at www.phila.gov/ready, sign up for weather alerts from ReadyNotifyPA, or follow updates on the Office of Emergency Management's Blogspot, Facebook, LinkedIn, MySpace or Twitter pages. The City's 3-1-1 Center will also be open from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Wednesday to handle public inquiries about the storm.

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