

NEWS



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CITY OF PHILADELPHIA DECLARES SNOW EMERGENCY

City Activates Emergency Operations Center

PHILADELPHIA, PA –This evening, Mayor Michael A. Nutter, City of Philadelphia Managing Director Camille Cates Barnett, PhD and Streets Department Commissioner Clarena I. W. Tolson advised residents of the City’s plans in anticipation of a significant snowfall affecting the City. Current forecasts predict 8-12 inches of snow accumulation, beginning Sunday night and ending around noon on Monday.

“We are going to need the cooperation of residents to help us make our snow removal efforts effective,” stated Managing Director Dr. Camille Cates Barnett. “Our crews will do the best they can to remove snow in a timely manner, but illegally parked cars and illegal plowing of private lots on to public streets will hinder our ability to clear the roads, especially around some of the smaller streets in South Philadelphia.”

The City will declare a Snow Emergency at 6:00 p.m. on Sunday, which means 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 starting at 8:30 p.m. A list of snow emergency routes can be found at www.phila.gov/streets and is attached to this press release.

“Streets Department crews need to be able to access streets”, said Commissioner Tolson, who urged residents to follow the tips below for a successful snow and ice removal partnership.

- Park your car at least 20 feet from the corner, as required by the state vehicle code. Cars parked too close to the corner limit the turning radius of salting and plowing vehicles.
- The Police Department and the Philadelphia Parking Authority will be ticketing and towing illegally parked vehicles which can impede the snow removal operation starting at 8:30 p.m. this evening. If your car is towed, call 215-686-SNOW for its location. Do NOT call 911.

- Do not shovel or plow snow into the street. This practice is illegal, and hampers our ability to effectively clear the roadways. Particularly with the anticipated freezing temperatures, placing snow in the street after it has been cleared will create dangerous icy patches, posing hazards to drivers and pedestrians.
- While clearing snow from your car or property, please place snow in a safe place on your property so that snow mounds do not obstruct the cleared pathway.
- Clear a sidewalk path at least 30” wide within 6 hours of the end of the storm.
- Clear snow from neighborhood sewer drains to allow melting snow to drain.
- Stay tuned to local media for updates.
- Check on sick and elderly neighbors.

Commissioner Tolson said, “We are urging residents to stay off the streets during the snowfall, if at all possible. The less traffic on city streets, the more effective our plow efforts will be. SEPTA will be operating and we urge citizens to use public transportation.”

In addition, the City has declared a Code Blue to provide additional 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.

To coordinate the City’s response to this Snow Emergency, the Managing Director’s Office of Emergency Management has activated the City’s Emergency Operations Center as of 6:00 p.m. Agencies in the Emergency Operations Center include: The Philadelphia Police Department, Fire Department, Streets Department, Public Property Department, Office of Fleet Management, Office of Supportive Housing, Fairmount Park Commission, Pennsylvania State Police, Pennsylvania Department of Transportation, Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency, Delaware River Port Authority, Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority, Philadelphia Parking authority, Salvation Army, American red Cross, and PECO.

Dr. Barnett also reminded Philadelphians to take precautionary measures to protect themselves and their neighbors from injuries and accidents common in winter weather:

- 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. Don't feel the job has to get done in one session.
- Push the snow. Don't lift. If you must lift, use your legs not your back.
- Drink during breaks to avoid dehydration.
- Never throw over your shoulder. Twisting can strain the back.
- Dress warmly in layers with a hat. Cover your neck.
- Take smaller scoops of snow, keeping them light and small.
- Take a break if you're beginning to sweat. Bodies lose heat faster in damp clothes, which makes you more prone to injury.
- 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

- In an emergency, call a doctor, or 911 for a medic unit, or go to an emergency room. Until medical help arrives, protect someone suffering from exposure to the cold with extra blankets and clothing.

For more winter weather preparedness information, visit www.phila.gov/ready. Managing Director Barnett indicated that the City of Philadelphia will be open for business on Monday and City employees should report to work as usual.

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