



MISSISSIPPI EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY
NEWS RELEASE
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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State Prepares For Winter Blast

PEARL – MEMA and key state agencies are preparing for a strong winter storm system that will move through Mississippi tonight into Thursday. The National Weather Service is forecasting snow, sleet, freezing rain and rain for most of the state. Temperatures are expected to remain well below freezing through Sunday for the northern half of Mississippi with the possibility of single digit lows.

Earlier today Governor Haley Barbour issued a state of emergency in advance of the weather.

"I have issued a state of emergency to protect all Mississippians from the dangers this bitter cold presents." said Governor Barbour. "Our state agencies are ready to respond and our residents can help themselves by protecting their families, homes and vehicles."

MEMA Executive Director Mike Womack is also urging Mississippians to watch out for one another. "We should all think about opening our homes to neighbors, especially seniors, who may not have adequate heat. It's the same thing we say that during a hurricane, only this time for people who don't have the ability or can't afford to heat their homes."

The following is a list of preparations being made by state agencies:

MEMA: Keeping in close contact with local emergency managers to provide resources if necessary. For updates follow us on Facebook and twitter using **MSEMA**.

MS Dept. of Education: The Mississippi Department of Education has asked district superintendents to report school closings to the department and closings will be listed on www.mde.k12.ms.us.

MS Dept. of Transportation: MDOT will have crews monitoring the roadways at all times out in each district, especially the bridges and overpasses since they tend to ice first. As roads begin to slush and ice over, each district is responsible for sending out a MS Traffic Alert on the iced road condition. MDOT maintenance crews will be out on the roads with trucks to salt/gravel those icy roadways.

MS State Dept. of Health: MSDH Emergency Response Coordinators across the state are continually checking on healthcare facilities licensed by MSDH to ensure they are prepared for impending winter weather and that they are able to continue all standard operations. The MSDH Bureau of Emergency Medical Services continues to remind State EMS of the immediate response necessary to residents exposed to extreme weather. More information on staying safe and healthy during severe winter weather is available on www.healthmys.com.

"Disaster Preparedness Saves Lives and Property"
Visit us online at www.msema.org

MS Dept. of Public Safety: MDPS has an 800 number the public can call to get updated with the latest road and weather conditions for their area. That number is 800-843-5352. Mississippians can also go to, www.dps.state.ms.us look under road conditions to find district by district information.

MS Attorney General: “Consumer Tips for Storm Victims” guide can be found at www.agjimhood.com. Many of these tips are applicable in winter/ice storms. Consumers with concerns or any fraud related complaints can call the Attorney General's Consumer Protection Hotline at 1-800-281-4418.

MS State Fire Marshal: Fire safety information and tips are available in the special Holiday and Heating Fire Safety Web page on www.mid.state.ms.us.

MS Department of Human Services: The announcement of DHS office closings will be disseminated through MS Public Broadcasting and other local media sources as available. Currently, all offices are scheduled to be open statewide.

MS National Guard: The Mississippi National Guard is fully prepared to support state and local authorities with manpower and equipment statewide during and after this winter weather threat.

MS 211: Hotline can be accessed from any phone around the state by simply dialing 211 just as you would 911 for an emergency. Our call specialists can connect callers to the help they need--from shelter information to financial assistance with heating bills.

MS Public Broadcasting: Mississippians can stay informed of the latest weather updates, road conditions and shelter information across the state by tuning to Mississippi Public Broadcasting. Starting today, MPB will increase its weather and emergency information reports. Follow MPB weather updates on Twitter.

MS Forestry Commission: The Forestry Commission is prepared to provide wildfire protection in the event of any wildfire activity occurring during this period of severely cold weather. Also, the Forestry Commission stands ready to provide assistance to county emergency coordinators in response to damages caused by an ice storm event.

For more information, contact Jeff Rent or Greg Flynn in MEMA External Affairs at 866-920-MEMA (6362), or visit us online at www.msema.org.

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