



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR  
CITY OF CHICAGO

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**MAYOR EMANUEL, CITY OF CHICAGO OFFICIALS PROVIDE UPDATE ON WINTER WEATHER  
RESPONSE AND EFFORTS TO HELP KEEP RESIDENTS SAFE AS EXTREMELY FRIGID  
TEMPERATURES AND HIGH WINDS CONTINUE**

Mayor Rahm Emanuel and City of Chicago officials today provided an update on the City's response to the extremely cold temperatures that arrived in Chicago overnight, after days of snowfall and blowing snow. A coordinated citywide response continues to focus on keeping residents – especially those most vulnerable – safe and warm during the extreme cold temperatures.

"Our city is confronting some of the most extreme weather we've seen in decades – and it's clear that Chicagoans are rising to the challenge," said Mayor Emanuel. "I ask everyone to keep exercising good judgment and remain indoors if at all possible, to take the warnings and advisories seriously, and to check on the well-being of family, friends, and neighbors."

Multiple departments and agencies are working to provide a constant assessment of the situation across the city to ensure the safety of residents as Chicago continues to feel the impact of the extremely cold temperatures and snow accumulation.

"I want to thank all of the city workers for their efforts to make sure our city keeps moving and our residents have access to vital city services when needed most. And most of all, I want to thank all Chicagoans for their patience and cooperation," added Mayor Emanuel.

"We remind residents to take precautions and to call 311 and we will connect you to City services and resources for assistance," said Gary Schenkel, Executive Director of the Office of Emergency Management and Communications.

The Department of Streets and Sanitation continues to monitor road conditions and has deployed the full fleet of more than 280 snow plows and salt spreaders, 26 smaller four-wheel plows and 30 quick hitch plows attached to garbage trucks to remove snow and spread salt ensuring streets are safe for motorists and emergency vehicles.

121 NORTH LASALLE STREET, ROOM 507, CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60602

The City of Chicago has already received more than 34 inches of snow this winter, including almost 23 inches since December 26.

"Snow removal vehicles continue to work non-stop as blowing snow and freezing temperatures impact Chicago roads," said Streets and Sanitation Commissioner Charles L. Williams. "We are focused on ensuring main arteries remain clear and safe for motorists and emergency vehicles, while also plowing side and residential streets to make them safe and passable for residents."

The City's first priority with every snow program is to ensure arterial streets are clear and safe. Plows will continue to plow side and residential streets, but conditions on Chicago's side streets may vary with the volume of snow and high winds that occurred with the recent weather system. Vehicles will work quickly and safely to make side and residential streets safe and passable.

#### FAMILY AND SUPPORT SERVICES UPDATE

Through Tuesday, the Department of Family and Support Services (DFSS) is extending the hours at its six community service centers and six senior centers, which will be open from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. to provide a refuge from the cold. The Garfield Community Service Center at 10 South Kedzie is always open 24 hours and can connect residents in need of shelter.

The Department has also made arrangements with its shelter partners to increase outreach efforts to assist residents in need such as homeless, seniors and have those facilities operate continuously, around the clock, from Sunday through Tuesday. DFSS and shelter partners have added one outreach team –two per shift – increasing capacity for shelter placement and well-being checks. Additional staff will be directed to conduct street outreach checking on homeless. Shelter partners are also prepared to add more than 100 shelter beds as needed.

"We have mobilized our non-profit partners to assist residents in need, including homeless persons and seniors," said Evelyn Diaz, Commissioner of the Department of Family and Support Services. "If you are seeking a warm place, you can call 311 and we will provide assistance."

Anyone who needs to locate a warming center or secure shelter should contact 311 directly. If they are unable to get to a warming center or shelter on their own, 311 can make transportation arrangements for them. 311 can also be used to request well-being checks for at risk residents or to request any other necessary City service.

In addition, Chicago Public Library branches also serve as warming centers and will be open during normal hours, which vary by branch.

#### CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS

CPS schools will be closed Tuesday.

"The safety and well-being of our students is paramount," said CPS CEO Barbara Byrd-Bennett. "Given the extreme temperatures, schools will remain closed on Tuesday."

Parents can also call (773) 553-3100 or visit the CPS website for more information.

#### FIRE SAFETY TIPS

The Chicago Fire Department does not recommend that residents use space heaters, but acknowledges that people may rely on them during cold winter months. To minimize the dangers of space heaters, the Fire Department recommends only using heaters that are UL certified as safe and never use an extension cord with a space heater, which can cause the cord to overheat and burn. Most importantly, never allow a space heater within three feet of anything that can burn, especially bedding.

“Sadly, we have found that fires have started because children have moved a space heater closer to the bed for more heat after parents have gone to bed for the night,” said Jose Santiago, Fire Commissioner. “Residents should also check and replace batteries in smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors, especially this close to the holiday season. Batteries may have been borrowed for new electronics or toys.”

Fire officials also encouraged residents to check to ensure their carbon monoxide detectors are working properly. With furnaces running during normal cold weather, a small carbon monoxide leak might not be noticed, but with heaters running non-stop to match the extreme cold, that small leak could become a deadly source of fumes. Carbon Monoxide detectors are designed to alert you before you feel sick, so if yours goes off get to fresh air and call 911.

#### DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

The Chicago Department of Public Health reminds residents to take extra precautions to stay warm and avoid hypothermia and frostbite. Residents should avoid unnecessary trips outside, and if it is necessary to go outside, wear several loose fitting layers of warm clothing. When shoveling snow, work slowly and take frequent breaks to avoid exhaustion. Be sure to winterize your home and vehicles, and keep cell phones charged with extra batteries for emergencies.

#### AIRPORTS UPDATE:

As of 10:30 a.m., airlines at O’Hare had proactively canceled more than 1,600 flights and were experiencing some delays averaging 40 minutes due to de-icing issues and other factors related to extreme cold. At Midway, airlines are reporting delays of 20 minutes or more and have proactively canceled more than 85 flights. Travelers are encouraged to confirm the status of their flight with their airlines throughout prior to heading to airport.

#### CTA UPDATE:

The CTA is providing normal weekday service today, and trains and buses are running on every route. The CTA has experienced some minor delays related to weather, and continues to dispatch CTA crews quickly as issues arise. We advise customers to allow extra travel time, and strongly recommend customers get up-to-date bus and train arrival information via the CTA’s web site --

transitchicago.com, on Twitter @CTA, sign up for Bus and Train Tracker text/email alerts or access Bus and Train Tracker via mobile phones and at rail stations and bus stops.

#### DEPARTMENT OF BUILDINGS

During extreme weather, the Department of Buildings focuses its efforts on complaints from tenants regarding inadequate heat and reassigns inspectors to make sure these complaints are dealt with as quickly as possible.

If a tenant is without heat, they should first contact their landlord and then call 311 to report the issue. The Department of Buildings enforces the Chicago Heat Ordinance, which mandates that the temperature inside a rental residence is at least 68 degrees from 8:30 a.m. to 10:30 p.m., and 66 degrees at night. Landlords face fines of up to \$500 per day, per violation, for each day they do not supply adequate heat.

Since midnight, the Department of Buildings has received 46 additional heat complaints. All complaints are being addressed and, at this time, there are no reports of conditions that warrant emergency relocation.

#### DEPARTMENT OF WATER MANAGEMENT

The Department of Water Management has been adding overnight crews during the extreme cold to address any issues with fire hydrants or water leaks. Since the weather system began last Thursday, DWM has repaired 40 leaks on water mains and other pipes.

To avoid frozen water pipes, residents can keep a trickle of water running and allow warm air to heated areas where pipes are exposed. Under no circumstances should residents use open flames on frozen pipes, as this can create a fire hazard.

#### DIVVY

Due to the weather, Chicago's bike-sharing program, Divvy, remains closed and will re-open after the extreme weather passes. No bikes can be rented after the temporary closure has begun, though any bikes in use at the time can be returned to any Divvy station with an available dock. Members will also be informed of closure and re-opening via email, and questions can be answered by a service representative at 1-855-55-DIVVY (553-4889).

#### 311/CITY SERVICES

As can be expected during inclement weather, call volume has increased with the frigid temperatures. Residents are asked to be patient when calling 311, especially during peak call times during the day.

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