

News Release

January 12, 2018

City takes steps to prepare for upcoming extreme cold weather

City of Toronto staff are preparing roads and services to help keep residents safe as this morning's rain is forecasted to change to freezing rain mixed with ice pellets. Temperatures are expected to drop suddenly around noon with the potential for a flash freeze followed by a moderate snowfall. Residents should be prepared for a slower than usual commute home.

Motorists are reminded to be extra cautious and watch for pedestrians and cyclists, especially during dusk and evening hours when visibility is low. Road conditions are expected to be slick, and can cause vehicles to slide and lose their ability to make sudden stops. Ensure that headlights, brake lights and signals are working. Headlights should be turned on at dusk. Avoid distractions while driving, such as eating or using phones.

Pedestrians should take extra caution on sidewalks. Pedestrians are reminded to cross at traffic signals, crosswalks and stop signs where possible. Try to make eye contact with drivers before stepping off the curb. Walk, don't run, across intersections. Only cross when you have enough time to safely do so.

"City staff are working hard to ensure the safety of all residents during this Extreme Cold Weather alert," said Mayor John Tory. "As the weather changes, I ask everyone to take extra precautions while out and about today and assist vulnerable friends, neighbours and fellow residents."

Extreme Cold Weather Alert and Warming Centres

An extreme cold weather alert has been issued for January 12. The warming centre at Metro Hall, 55 John St. will open at 7 p.m. tonight and remain available 24/7 until at least 7 a.m., Monday, January 15. The warming centre at Regent Park Community Centre remains open. This is in addition to several other winter respite locations. The full list can be found at: <http://www.toronto.ca/homelesshelp>. Services will be provided to all who request it.

The City asks that residents help vulnerable people by calling 311 if there is a need for street outreach assistance. Call 911 if the situation is an emergency.

Please call or visit vulnerable friends, neighbours and family to ensure they are not experiencing any difficulties related to the weather.

Road Operations

The City's 200 salt trucks will be standing by at strategic locations across the city, and will respond to conditions as they develop. Drivers are asked to take special precaution on hills and bridges.

The City takes a strategic approach to salting and plowing. Salt trucks attend to the expressways and the main roads first. The salt trucks then move to local roads. If the City receives two centimetres of snow, the plows are sent to the expressways and, if five centimetres falls, plows also go to the main roads, with plowing taking place intermittently for the duration of the storm.

When the snow stops, if the snow accumulation has reached eight centimetres, plows are sent to local roads. Residents are asked not to call 311 during the storm to ask when their street will be plowed. The City will clear the local roads between 14 and 16 hours after the snow stops falling. Visit <http://www.toronto.ca/plowTO> to see the real-time location of salters, plows and sidewalk plows in the City of Toronto.

The City will clear snow from sidewalks on roads with high pedestrian traffic and on bus routes where it is mechanically possible to do so after two centimetres of snow have fallen and from the remaining roads after eight centimetres have fallen. In the central core of the city, property owners are required to clear their sidewalks of snow within 12 hours after a storm. More information about sidewalk snow clearing in Toronto and a map of where the service takes place are available at <http://www.toronto.ca/transportation/snow/sidewalks>.

Residents are asked to help by clearing ice and snow from the catch basins in front of their homes to prevent slush from stopping water from draining off the road. Residents who see flooding on streets in their community are asked to contact 311.

Watermain repair – Yonge and York Mills

The sinkhole on Yonge Street at William Carson Crescent was due to two water-related infrastructure issues at this site. There was both a broken watermain and a collapsed storm sewer. There was also some minor damage to an Enbridge gas main at this location. There was however, no gas leak.

As of this morning, the watermain has been fully repaired and water service is restored to all residents. Enbridge has repaired the gas main. Toronto Water is now repairing the storm sewer, after which the hole will be filled and the road repaired and reopened.

Due to the amount of underground infrastructure at this site, extensive construction and repair is required. Pending any additional complications with the repair to the storm sewer, we expect the road to be repaired and re-opened by end of day, Monday, January 15.

Road Repairs – Bathurst and Finch

The pothole at Bathurst Street and Finch Avenue has been repaired and all lanes of traffic have reopened.

Reporting a Pothole

Residents are asked to use the City's online service at <http://www.toronto.ca/311> to report potholes so crews can be assigned to repair them. Following these three tips when reporting a pothole will assist with expediting the repair work:

- Provide the precise geographic location of the pothole – the nearest cross streets and a street address if possible.
- Provide the pothole's exact location on the roadway – in the eastbound centre lane or in the westbound curb lane, for example.
- Estimate the size of the pothole.

Toronto Water Operations

Cold weather and rapid swings between thaw and freezing temperatures can cause an increase in watermain breaks. Toronto Water staff are ready to respond to service calls 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Cold weather can also cause water pipes to freeze. Residents are reminded to prepare their pipes for winter by wrapping foam pipe insulation around pipes most prone to freezing, especially near outside walls and in crawl spaces, attics and garages. It is also important to seal air leaks around windows and doors, and to disconnect hoses and drain the outdoor water supply. When the temperature drops to well below zero, you may choose to run a pencil-thin stream of water to create movement in the pipes that will help prevent freezing. However, you will be charged for the water used. More tips can be found at <http://www.toronto.ca/frozenpipes>.

The City continues to work closely with the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) to monitor water levels.

Toronto is Canada's largest city, the fourth largest in North America, and home to a diverse population of about 2.8 million people. It is a global centre for business, finance, arts and culture and is consistently ranked one of the world's most livable cities. For information on non-emergency City services and programs, Toronto residents, businesses and visitors can visit <http://www.toronto.ca>, call 311, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, or follow us on Twitter at <http://www.twitter.com/TorontoComms> and on Instagram at <http://www.instagram.com/cityofto>.

- 30 -

Media contact: Media Relations, 416-338-5986, media@toronto.ca