

## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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Pete Ricketts, Governor

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### Nebraska to Experience Major Spring Storm: NDOT, NSP and NEMA Advise Caution

March 12, 2021 (Lincoln, Neb.) — The Nebraska Department of Transportation (NDOT) crews are prepared for a major spring storm which looks to impact most of the state in different ways over the weekend. Forecasts call for blizzard conditions in western Nebraska with heavy snow and high winds, while heavy rains are expected to impact a majority of the rest of the state. High winds, up to or even greater than 45 mph in some parts of the state, will have significant impact on visibility and high-profile vehicles. Workers and equipment will be out to clear the highways and monitor changing conditions throughout the storm, which could impact travel Friday evening into Monday.

#### Western Nebraska

NDOT crews have been preparing for this storm for several days. This includes clearing existing snow away from the roadways and stockpiling material to address the anticipated amounts of snow. This storm is expected to drop significant snowfall amounts. This coupled with high winds, visibility will be a concern. In advance of this blizzard event in western Nebraska, NDOT is advising against all unnecessary travel.

#### Central & Eastern Nebraska

With the combination of rain, flooding and flash flooding are a possibility. NDOT urges all drivers to never drive over a flooded roadway. Any water over the road could stall or even float a vehicle. Should you encounter a flooded roadway, please remember to turn around – don't drown.

"This latest storm looks to have significant impact in Nebraska's Panhandle in addition to our neighbors in Wyoming and Colorado," said acting NDOT Director Moe Jamshidi. "Our crews will be out working to clear roadways as conditions allow in a potential blizzard. With the forecasted snow fall totals coupled with high winds, we urge against all unnecessary travel in the blizzard affected areas. If you must travel during this winter storm, know before you go by checking [511.nebraska.gov](http://511.nebraska.gov) for road conditions and closures and always travel well established routes. Should motorists encounter flooding, remember to never travel over a flooded roadway."



“Our troopers will be prepared to help any motorists who need assistance,” said Colonel John Bolduc Superintendent of the Nebraska State Patrol. “We urge all drivers to be vigilant and avoid travel if conditions aren’t favorable.”

“Nebraska Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) has been monitoring this weather event in consultation with the National Weather Service offices in Cheyenne, North Platte, Hastings and Omaha,” said Bryan Tuma, NEMA Assistant Director. “Local emergency management officials have participated in those briefings and have awareness on the potential impact of this event on their respective jurisdictions. The Nebraska Watch Center at NEMA will monitor this event as it unfolds over the weekend and will work with other state agencies, local officials and our weather forecast partners to evaluate the impact on travelers and communities.”

Travelers are advised to be alert, be aware and check the most up to date travel conditions available through 511, Nebraska’s Advanced Traveler Information System. The system is available at all times via phone by dialing 511, online at: [511.nebraska.gov](https://511.nebraska.gov) or Nebraska 511’s smartphone app. Travelers are also encouraged to utilize NDOT’s Plow Tracker at <https://plows.nebraska.gov/index.html> where the public will be able to observe road conditions in real time from the cabs of NDOT Snow Plows. Please note that weather conditions are often worse than they appear on camera.

Should travel be absolutely necessary, NDOT reminds motorists to be prepared with warm clothing, water, and food. Be sure to travel on well-established routes and notify someone when you are leaving for your destination. If traveling a distance, a winter weather survival kit is advised with additional basic items. Travelers are advised to not drive faster than conditions allow. Surfaces will be slick under the snow and visibility may be poor. Allow plenty of time to arrive at your destination.

With snowplows out on the roads, travelers are urged to be cautious and courteous to those operating them, making sure to:

- Slow down as you approach plows. They travel slowly, usually 25-30 miles per hour or less.
- Stay well behind plows to give you and them plenty of room. When traveling outside of a business or residential district, it is unlawful to follow a highway maintenance vehicle (snowplow, truck, or grader) more closely than 100 feet when it is plowing snow, spreading salt or sand, or displaying a flashing amber or blue light.
- Never pass a plow on the right – snowplows are equipped with “wing plows” which extend beyond the truck itself.
- Know where plows are and actions they may be taking while they plow snow.

Motorists are reminded to make sure everyone in their vehicle wears a seat belt and children are in a car safety seat. Do not use cruise control in wet or snowy weather and keep a full gas tank.

For safe-driving tips and winter weather information, visit NDOT’s website, <http://dot.nebraska.gov/safety/driving/winter/> and NEMA’s website, <https://nema.nebraska.gov/operations/winter-weather#auto>

As a reminder, the NSP Highway Helpline is available 24 hours per day for motorists in need of assistance. Drivers can reach NSP by dialing \*55 from any cell phone or 800-525-5555 from any phone. Call 911 for any emergency.

#NDOT#

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