

STATEHOUSE OBSERVER



A Publication by the Department of Administrative Services - State Personnel Division

Administrative Services

Volume 35 Issue 5

Emergency Weather Policy Provides Guidance for Employees

A Letter from the Director:

Icy roads, blowing snow - many of us have already encountered a taste of inclement winter weather. Because our employee's roadway safety during this time of year is our foremost concern; inside this Statehouse Observer you will find important winter weather driving information that will help you prepare for the winter months. I also want to take a moment to remind all employees of the State of Nebraska's current emergency weather policy.

The State of Nebraska Emergency Weather Policy is as follows:

1. Agencies and departments of the State of Nebraska have a statutory responsibility (81-113) to be open for the transaction of business from at least 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

2. Prior to the onset of inclement weather, agencies should develop plans and alternatives on how best to serve the public should a weather emergency arise. All employees should be made aware of the procedures developed for that agency.



3. With the safety and welfare of our employees as a concern, employees will determine for themselves their ability to drive to work safely, the condition of their vehicle, and the immediate road conditions.

4. If an employee chooses not to report to work, they should follow their own agency policy for reporting their absence.

5. Employees choosing not to work during adverse weather conditions will have to use accrued vacation leave, earned compensatory time, or leave without pay. If feasible, agencies may allow employees to make up missed work time within the work week.

6. If an employees' normal work site is not open, for example in locations where employees work in buildings that are not owned or operated by the state, and an alternative work location is not an option, then the employee may be placed on a ready to work status. This means that they are ready and available to be called back to a work location, at any time. Employees in a ready to work status will be compensated. Employees shall perform any state work possible during this status.

7. Agencies are directed to be as reasonable as possible in the approval of the use of vacation, compensatory time, or leave without pay. Also, if possible or necessary, agencies are encouraged to allow the employees to make up any lost work time due to weather related conditions. Agency directors may authorize employees to work from other locations.

During this holiday season, let us all remember to be more cautious and courteous on the roadways, so we all can arrive safely at our destination and enjoy the holidays with our family and friends. If you have any questions concerning this policy, please send those comments to statehouse.observer@notes.state.ne.us or contact the Administrative Services - State Personnel Division at (402) 471-2833.

Thank you State Employees for all you do for the citizens of the State of Nebraska. Your efforts and dedications do not go unnoticed. I wish each of you a happy holiday season and look forward to our challenges and achievements in 2008!

Sincerely,

Carlos Castillo Jr, Director
Administrative Services

Ice and Snow - Take It Slow! The Nebraska

Article and additional information provided by Mary Jo Oie, Nebraska Department of Roads

The Nebraska Department of Roads wants to tell you about their hopes for this winter's driving season. They hope you, your loved ones, and their snowplow drivers will all stay safe. To help remind motorists how important it is to be prepared and to drive according to the conditions, the State Roads Department is focusing on the new nationwide winter driving slogan...



"Ice & Snow -- Take It Slow."

There are so many things a driver should know and focus on when it comes to ensuring motorist and passenger safety during winter conditions. There are seasonal words like winter storm watch, winter storm warnings, blowing and drifting snow advisory, black ice, and snow cloud that are used to describe the various conditions. These terms and many other helpful winter driving safety reminders can be found on the website: <http://www.dor.state.ne.us/rca/wz/winter-page.htm>.

Don't take chances...know before you go! In Nebraska and several surrounding states, you can dial 511 free, year-round, day or night for travel condition information. Primarily timely weather reporting for specific travel areas, the 511 Nebraska Travel Information line also has neighboring states' reports available at this number. If you are out-

side of the state and wish to check on Nebraska's current conditions, dial 800-906-9069.

State Highway Operations and Maintenance personnel will be ready to tackle winter weather challenges across the state. Although crews are well prepared, they are not magicians.

Motorists should watch for dispatched snowplows when snow has fallen and winds are calm

enough for the operators to see. It is unlawful to follow a snowplow more closely than 100 feet when it is plowing snow, spreading salt or sand, or displaying a flashing amber or blue light. Drive with your lights on so you can see and be seen and do not attempt to pass a plow until the plow reaches a clear area. Snowplows usually leave a ridge of snow, and swirling snow can add to the hazards of passing or following too closely.

Since winter in Nebraska is bound to be full of surprises, snow, and slippery slopes, the Nebraska Department of Roads urges motorists to make sure everyone in their vehicle is wearing a safety

ICE & SNOW TAKE IT SLOW

Slippery When Wet!

First snow or ice — Drivers aren't prepared for winter driving and forget to take it slow. Remember to drive well below the posted speed limit and leave plenty of room between vehicles.

Black ice — Roads that seem dry may actually be slippery — and dangerous. Take it slow when approaching intersections, off-ramps, bridges or shady areas — all are prime spots for "black ice."

Limited visibility — Stay attentive and know what's going on around you.

Safe Around Snowplows!

Distance — Give snowplows room to work. The plows are wide and can cross the centerline or shoulder. Don't tailgate and try not to pass. If you must pass, take extreme caution and beware of the blowing snow cloud.

Speed — Snowplows travel below the posted speed limit. Be patient.

Vision — A snowplow operator's field of vision is restricted. You may see them, but they don't always see you. Keep your distance and watch for sudden stops or turns.

NDOR
Nebraska
Department of Roads

belt. Don't take chances! Ice and snow means take it slow.

Department of Roads Provides Winter Safety Tips

For more information visit the Nebraska Department of Roads website at www.dor.state.ne.us

Ice and Snow...Take it Slow

Speed — The faster you're going, the longer it will take to stop. When accelerating on ice or snow, take it slow to avoid slipping and sliding.

Distance — Give yourself extra space. It takes longer and farther to bring your car to a stop on slick and snowy roads. Leave room between you and the vehicle in front of you.

Brake — Brake early, brake slowly, brake correctly, and never slam on the brakes. If you have anti-lock brakes, press the pedal down firmly and hold it. If you don't have anti-lock brakes, gently pump the pedal. Either way, give yourself plenty of room to stop.

Control — When driving on ice and snow, **do not use the cruise control**. Avoid abrupt steering maneuvers. When merging into traffic, take it slow. Sudden movements can cause your vehicle to slide and you will lose control.

Vision — Be aware of what's going on well ahead of you. Actions by other vehicles will alert you to problems more quickly, and give you that splitsecond of extra time to react safely.

Knowledge — Before leaving home, find out about the driving conditions. Safe drivers know the weather, and their limits. If the weather is bad, remember, "If it's snowing, should you be going?"

Clear — Remove any snow on your vehicle's windows, lights, brake lights and signals. Make sure you can see and be seen.

Inspect — Check your vehicle's tires, wiper blades, fluids, lights, belts, and hoses. A breakdown is bad on a good day and dangerous on a bad-weather day.

Time — Leave plenty of time to reach your destination safely. It's not worth putting yourself and others in a dangerous situation just to be on time.

www.nebraskatransportation.org

www.511nebraska.org

DIAL 511

Winter Survival Kit

Pack a winter survival kit to prepare yourself for winter road conditions. The following are some recommended items to place in your winter survival kit:

- Cell Phone w/charger or extra battery
- Ice scraper
- Snow shovel
- Small bag of sand, salt, or kitty litter
- Matches, candles, and coffee can
- Blankets or sleeping bag
- Extra clothing including hat and gloves
- High energy or dehydrated foods (granola bars, trail mix, cereal, etc.)
- Bottled water
- Jumper cables
- Flashlights
- Emergency first aid kit
- Road maps
- Battery operated radio
- Extra batteries (cold weather reduces battery strength)
- Fuel line antifreeze
- Red flag or bandana (fasten to car to signal you are in trouble) or warning light and road flares

Trapped in a Storm?

- Don't panic!
- Avoid over-exertion and over exposure to the cold! Shoveling or pushing your vehicle in the cold can kill.
- Stay in your vehicle. Do not try to walk for assistance.
- Turn on your hazard lights or attach a brightly colored cloth on your radio antenna to make your vehicle more visible.
- Run your engine sparingly. Check to ensure that the tailpipe is not blocked by ice or snow. Keep a window on the side sheltered from the wind cracked to keep fresh air in your vehicle and prevent the build up of carbon monoxide.
- Bundle up in a blanket.
- Make sure you wear a hat and scarf. You lose up to 60% of your body heat through your head.
- Keep moving, exercise your limbs, and clap your hands-- don't remain in one position too long.
- Stay awake.
- Watch for on-coming traffic or rescuers.

World AIDS Day Was Observed on December 1

Article provided by Ann Chambers, Disease Prevention & Health Promotion, Department of Health and Human Services

The 19th annual World AIDS Day was observed on Friday, December 1.

The first theme, "Stop AIDS. Keep the Promise" was an international campaign to promote awareness of the AIDS epidemic and ensure continuing support for AIDS prevention and treatment programs. Since the beginning of the AIDS epidemic, individual people acted on their own and played heroic roles in helping and caring for people living with AIDS. The World AIDS Campaign hopes to build on the strengths and contributions of individuals by encouraging others to promise to respond to HIV and AIDS at family and community levels.



countability," the second 2007 World AIDS Day theme was "Leadership: Take the Lead." Wherever you live, whatever walk of life you are from, no matter what you do for work, study, or recreation, there is something you can

do in the universal campaign "Stop AIDS." You can care for someone affected by AIDS, talk about AIDS prevention, or inspire others to donate money or time to an AIDS charity; there are many things we can do to lead the way on AIDS. Your efforts, no matter how small, can make a difference.

The DHHS HIV Prevention Program is continuing its "The Risk is NOT Knowing" media campaign. The goal of the

campaign is to encourage and increase HIV testing of all at-risk people in Nebraska. This campaign was designed in collaboration with University of Nebraska-Lincoln advertising students.

The HIV epidemic continues to increase in Nebraska, with nearly 1,957 Nebraskans diagnosed and reported with HIV and AIDS between 1985 and the end of 2006. One third of those have died, according to the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services. There are more persons living with HIV each year as HIV treatments continue to improve the lifespan of persons with HIV/AIDS. At the end of 2006, there were 1,402 persons living with HIV/AIDS among Nebraska residents.

For information about HIV/AIDS prevention in Nebraska, contact the DHHS HIV/AIDS Prevention Program at (402) 471-9098 or check the DHHS Web site at <http://www.hss.ne.gov/dpc/hiv.htm>.

Building on last year's theme of "Ac-

Graduate Certificate of Public Management Now Offered at UNO

Article provided by Meagan Van Gelder, Ed.D, Program Coordinator, University of Nebraska at Omaha

The University of Nebraska at Omaha (UNO) School of Public Administration is now offering a Graduate Certificate of Public Management. This new five-course sequence will allow working professionals with careers in the public sector, or graduate students in a related field of study, to enhance and expand their knowledge into the area of public management.

This program fills a real need in the state," said John Bartle, UNO School of Public Administration Director. "Completing this graduate certificate will allow people to enhance their skills in the management of public organizations. It will also allow people who already have a career in the public sector to work towards a professional certification without having to com-

plete a full master's degree."

Students will take courses in financial management, human resource management, organization theory, and public administration. There are also three electives in ethics, municipal government, or management information systems.

All certificate courses will be offered in Omaha, Lincoln, and online. UNO's School of Public Administration is a national leader in online graduate education, having offered an accredited, nationally-ranked MPA program online since 2000. Courses will be taught by full-time faculty with extensive experience both as scholars and practitioners.

"Another good thing about this program

is that students can pace themselves," Bartle said. "In Omaha, the certificate can be completed as quickly as two semesters. Online and in Lincoln, at least one course will be offered each semester, so the certificate could be completed in five semesters or less."

For more information or questions, prospective or current students can contact either:

* Mary Hamilton, director of professional programs, at mrhamilton@mail.unomaha.edu or (402) 554-2625; or

* Meagan Van Gelder, academic program coordinator at mvangelder@mail.unomaha.edu or (402) 554-3480.

State Employee Wellness Program Produces Results

Article provided by Bill Wiley, Communications & Legislative Services, Department of Health and Human Services

Wellness

Over 800 Nebraska state employees participated in the recent 2007 N-Lighten Nebraska State Employee Wellness Program, losing more than 1,650 pounds and logging 147,859 miles. The eight-week wellness program challenged team members to collectively lose pounds and participate in healthy wellness activities.

“State employees did a great job showing interest in improving their

life styles and health habits,” said Dr. Joann Schaefer, Chief Medical Officer for the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services. “More than 85% of the 140 teams participated in both accumulated physical activity and weight loss. With staff in more than 50 Nebraska counties participating, it truly demonstrates Nebraska state employees’ commitment to better health and wellness.”

Participants calculated points for all types of activity, based on the exertion required for the activity. One point was the equivalent of one mile walked. A team from the Department of Natural Resources accumulated 626 activity points equaling 626 miles during the eight-week competition, while a team from Omaha won the weight loss division by dropping nearly six percent of their total body weight.

The N-Lighten Nebraska State Employee Wellness Program began Sept. 4, and, over the next eight weeks, participants received weekly activity and nutrition tips designed to educate and motivate them to practice and adopt sustainable health habits. Participants were encouraged to log activity points and weight totals periodically on the N-Lighten Nebraska website and could check their progress on a real-time leader board.

N-Lighten Nebraska is a program open to anyone and conducted by the Nebraska Sports Council in partnership with the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension, and Tiger Coaching & Personal Training. Additional information about N-Lighten Nebraska is available at www.N-LightenNebraska.com.

The top 25 teams in each division are listed below.

Miles of Accumulated Activity

- 1 DNR Empty Nesters, Lincoln, 626.00
- 2 Purchasing Power, Elmwood, 600.00
- 3 Heart City Hotties, Valentine, 583.25
- 4 Team Ewald, Omaha, 578.25
- 5 The LRC Lean Radiant Champions, Lincoln, 559.33
- 6 DMV Drivers, Lincoln, 516.03
- 7 CIO Web 4 Wellness, Bennett, 487.06
- 8 NLETC Beauties and the Beast, Grand Island, 451.31
- 9 G.O.Y.A.D.S., Lincoln, 440.08
- 10 DOR TCS Thrashers, Lincoln, 429.18
- 11 HHSS Sitzmark, Lincoln, 429.05
- 12 CCPE Lincoln, 415.92
- 13 DHHS/DD/SC French Fried Thighs, Fremont, 398.58
- 14 AGO – Ex Post Fatso, Lincoln, 392.52
- 15 HHSS Snackers, Fairbury, 365.94
- 16 DED Lean Machines, Lincoln, 360.80
- 17 HHSS Sweet and Sassy, York, 337.42
- 18 NDR Rev Up, Omaha, 332.80
- 19 NDEQ Movers & Shakers, Denton, 325.81
- 20 HHSS Three’s Company, Norfolk, 323.88
- 21 CSE The Enforcers, Lincoln, 319.14
- 22 High Maintenance Divas, O’Neill, 317.47



- 23 AGO Phatsos, Lincoln, 317.40
- 24 NRC Daily Doubles, Lincoln, 317.12
- 25 NSP/CID Biggest Losers, Lincoln, 316.00

WEIGHT LOSS (percent of body weight)

- 1 On the Weigh Down, Omaha, 5.72%
- 2 DMV Drivers, Lincoln, 5.38%
- 3 ISP Phat Girlz, Gering, 4.72%
- 4 NLETC Beauties and the Beast, Grand Island, 4.57%
- 5 DED Lean Mean Machines, Lincoln, 4.53%
- 6 WNVH Curvey Critters, Scottsbluff, 4.01%
- 7 HHSS APS Skinny Minnies, Omaha, 3.91%
- 8 DMV Spunky Chunkies, Lincoln, 3.90%
- 9 DMV Dashers, Grand Island, 3.84%
- 10 DNR Empty Nesters, Lincoln, 3.74%
- 11 HHSS 29 Forever, Lincoln, 3.53%
- 12 Walking Antelopes, Kearney, 3.11%
- 13 AGO Toxic Slugs, Lincoln, 3.00%
- 14 Wausa Scalebusters, Bloomfield, 2.92%
- 15 CSE The Enforcers, Lincoln, 2.91%
- 16 N-Lightening, Lincoln, 2.82%
- 17 GPRometheans, Lincoln, 2.79%
- 18 NSP/CID Biggest Losers, Lincoln, 2.69%
- 19 Heart City Hotties, Valentine, 2.69%
- 20 HHSS Snackers, Fairbury, 2.56%
- 21 Purchasing Power, Elmwood, 2.56%
- 22 CIO Web 4 Wellness, Bennet, 2.48%
- 23 Ohos el Tigre, Lincoln, 2.48%
- 24 Pair of Parrotheads, Lincoln, 2.46%
- 25 NCBVI Winners, Lincoln, 2.44%

You Could Save 3 Lives!

January is National Blood Donor Month

Every 2 seconds someone, somewhere, needs blood...

Just one hour and one donation can save up to 3 lives...

More than 38,000 blood donations are needed each day...

60% of the US population is eligible to donate...only 5% give...do you?

Snow and ice, travel, holidays, family gatherings, and illness are just some of the reasons that the national blood supply is traditionally low during the winter months. In response, the American Red Cross and the American Association of Blood Banks are recognizing January as National Blood Donor Month.

The State of Nebraska will be participating in the National Blood Donor Month by sponsoring a Blood Drive on January 31st. All eligible state employees are encouraged to participate in the State of Nebraska Employee Blood Drive. The drive is scheduled for January 31st from 8:30 a.m. until 2:30 p.m. at the Scottish Rite Temple, 332 Centennial Mall South. Upon receiving approval from their supervisor, employees will be permitted up to one hour of time off to give blood without being charged vacation or sick leave. (This leave policy only applies when the donation is being made as part of a State approved blood drive conducted at the work place).

To schedule an appointment or for more information, please contact Stacey Dvorak at 471-4112 or by email at Stacey.Dvorak@nebraska.gov.

Employees can also schedule their own appointments by visiting the donation website at https://www.members-forlife.org/midamerica/mobilesch/bdc_sc.php and entering the sponsor code 2090.

The Nebraska State Patrol is also sponsoring a Blood Drive on February 14th. For more information, please contact Lynne Woody at 479-4931.

Who is eligible to Donate?

- You must be at least 17 years of age
- Weigh at least 110 lbs.
- Be in good overall health
- Have not donated within the last 56 days
- Be able to provide a list of all medications that you have taken during the last 30 days prior to donating
- Have not gotten any new tattoos within the last year

If you have any questions concerning your ability to donate blood please call 1-800-573-2767 and ask to speak with the donor health consultant (Ext. 2196)

Prior to donating you should:

- Get a good night's sleep
- Drink plenty of fluids
- Eat within 2-3 hours

The day of the drive:

- Bring your donor card or a State of Nebraska ID card or Driver's license with you.
- Be able to provide your Social Security number

PLEASE GIVE BLOOD



NATIONAL
Blood Donor
MONTH

MAKE
LIFESAVING
A HABIT



American Red Cross

**Nebraska
State Office Building
Blood Drive**

**THURSDAY--January 31, 2008
8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.
SCOTTISH RITE TEMPLE**

**For an appointment call
Stacey Dvorak 471-4112
Or visit www.givebloodgivelife.org
Sponsor Code 2090**

THE GIFT OF LIFE RUNS THROUGH YOU.

givebloodgivelife.org

The Statehouse Observer is also available online at:
<http://www.das.state.ne.us/personnel/observer/>

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