

February 5-6, 2010 -- Snowstorm Information from the Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM)

Feb. 5, 2010, 0845

Current situation

- * A severe winter weather system entered the Commonwealth early this morning. It is forecast to bring up to 24 inches of snow to parts of Virginia. Western and Northern Virginia will receive the heaviest snow.
- * Parts of Virginia have already received enough snow to make traveling on roads hazardous. Road conditions will continue to worsen as the storm moves through the state. Stay off the roads.
- * The governor declared a state of emergency Wednesday to enable state agencies to quickly assist local government response.

State efforts

- * The Virginia Department of Emergency Management is coordinating preparations at the state level, assessing resources. VDEM has conducted conference calls among local governments, the National Weather Service and other state agencies.
- * The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) crews have been applying anti-icing chemicals on pavements and bridges. Crews are still completing cleanup efforts from two other winter storms that impacted parts of Virginia in the past week.
- * The Virginia Department of Health is coordinating with hospitals and local EMS. No issues have been reported.
- * The Virginia State Police have responded to numerous traffic crashes.
- * Teams of Virginia National Guard Soldiers have been prepositioned throughout the state to assist state and local emergency response organizations with rescue and transportation operations.
- * VNG Soldiers are **not** able to respond directly to citizen requests for assistance.

* VNG has been authorized to bring up to 500 Soldiers on state active duty.

* Dominion Virginia Power is reporting approximately 50 power outages, and the number is increasing. An updated list of outages by region is available at <http://www.dom.com/storm-center/dominion-electric-outage-summary.jsp>.

What the public should do

* Be aware of the current weather forecast for your area. The National Weather Service provides local winter weather advisories, warnings and safety information at <http://www.weather.gov> <<http://www.weather.gov/>> .

* Stay off the roads. Half of the December snowstorm deaths resulted from vehicle accidents on slick roads and motorists driving too fast. If you must drive, wear a seatbelt.

* Real-time road conditions are available by calling 5-1-1 or visiting <http://511Virginia.org> <<http://511virginia.org/>> .

* Virginians are asked to please respect 911 and its cellular equivalent #77 by using them for emergencies only. These contact numbers should NOT be used to ask about road conditions, to report power outages, or what schools/businesses are closed. Emergency numbers need to remain available for true emergencies where immediate rescue and assistance are needed.

* 211 and 211Virginia.org

* Through 211, the Virginia Department of Social Services can help residents seeking assistance for an elderly or disabled person during the storm who need information on warming shelters in the area who are concerned about an unsheltered individual or family at risk of hypothermia.

* When you dial 2-1-1, a trained professional will listen to your situation and suggest sources of help using one of the largest databases of health and human services in your community and statewide. All referrals are confidential, and you can search for these same services on <http://211virginia.org> <<http://211virginia.org/>> .

* If you lose power, call your power company to report it.

* Avoid overexertion during clean up. Shoveling snow or pushing a car can bring on a heart attack or make other medical conditions worse.

Know the signs of a heart attack:

* Chest discomfort-Most heart attacks involve discomfort in the center of the chest that lasts more than a few minutes or that goes away and comes back. It can feel like uncomfortable pressure, squeezing, fullness or pain.

* Discomfort in other areas of the upper body-Symptoms can include pain or discomfort in one or both arms, the back, neck, jaw or stomach.

* Shortness of breath may occur with or without chest discomfort.

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* Other signs include breaking out in a cold sweat, nausea or light-headedness.

* Be careful using generators and space heaters. Do not operate generators indoors. Safety information is available at <http://www.ReadyVirginia.gov> <<http://www.readyvirginia.gov/>> .