



## Georgia Winter Storm January 23, 2026

### Office of the Governor

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Press Release January 22, 2026:

#### ***"Gov. Kemp Declares State of Emergency, Activates State Operations Center Ahead of Winter Storm***

**ATLANTA** – Governor Brian P. Kemp declared a statewide State of Emergency today ahead of Winter Storm Fern's impact on the state this weekend. The Governor also directed the Georgia Emergency Management and Homeland Security Agency (GEMA/HS) to activate the State Operations Center (SOC) and mobilize any needed resources to address any potential needs around the state. The State of Emergency will run through January 29, 2026.

"As forecasts continue to evolve, Georgians should be prepared for freezing precipitation that causes dangerous conditions and the potential for damage and power loss beginning Saturday," **said Governor Brian Kemp**. "I have been working closely with state and local officials to ensure we are prepared for all scenarios. The Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) will begin treating roadways ahead of the storm's initial impact, and -- along with our emergency management and public safety teams -- they will be working around the clock throughout this weather event. I'm urging all Georgians to take necessary precautions now to ensure their families and pets can stay safe, warm, and fed over the coming days."

The State of Emergency allows for the Georgia Department of Defense to provide up to 500 Georgia National Guard troops, should they be needed for preparation, response, and recovery efforts. Among other provisions, the State of Emergency order also prohibits price gouging; suspends hours-of-service limitations for commercial vehicle operators involved in response activities; and

temporarily increases weight, height, and length limits for commercial vehicles transporting essential supplies. Access the full State of Emergency Executive Order [here](#).

### **Current Weather Forecast:**

- A major winter storm is expected to bring significant impacts to parts of Georgia, especially north of I-20, this weekend.
- Much of North Georgia is under a Winter Storm Watch from late Friday night through Monday morning, with the possibility of being upgraded to a Winter Storm Warning or Winter Weather Advisory, and additional counties may be added.
- Chances for wintry precipitation are high across North Georgia throughout the weekend.
- The current expectation is for most of that precipitation to be freezing rain.
- The presence of rain, freezing rain, sleet, or snow will depend on the exact temperature at any given time.
- Precipitation will likely begin in northern Georgia Saturday afternoon and will continue through Sunday evening before temperatures reach the teens and 20s on Monday morning.
- Temperatures will remain very cold through Tuesday, January 27.
- Prolonged freezing temperatures could prevent melting and drying on roads and potentially cause pipes to burst.
- Dangerous travel conditions will be possible beginning Saturday and could continue into Monday and Tuesday.
- Widespread power outages are possible in impacted areas, with gusty winds continuing through Monday.
- Impacts for specific locations will continue to be refined over the next few days as forecast confidence improves.
- As always, stay tuned to forecast updates from your local National Weather Service office and reliable media outlets.

### **State Action and Preparation:**

The Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) is actively staging crews and equipment to respond to the current winter weather threat. They will soon begin brining operations to pre-treat interstates, state routes, bridges, and overpasses in needed areas of the state. Crews will prioritize keeping high-traffic routes passable for emergency vehicles and first responders, as well as areas providing access to hospitals and urgent care centers. Residents are urged to avoid travel in the most impacted areas whenever possible this weekend. For those who must travel, GDOT advises motorists to exercise caution and provide ample space for crews to safely continue treating and clearing roads to ensure the safety of the traveling public.

*The Commercial Vehicle Enforcement Division has partnered with GDOT to escort brining details. Department of Public Safety (DPS) Troopers and Officers will be on standby across the state for any service calls regarding the winter weather and other needs, with specific response teams stationed in areas most affected by the storm.*

*The Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Forestry Commission, and Department of Agriculture have response teams and chainsaw crews at the ready for any requests to clear road debris, public safety assistance, and other critical needs. The Environmental Protection Division (EPD) will identify debris staging areas and ensure storm debris is properly handled, stored, and disposed of during the severe weather event. EPD is also prepared to support critical infrastructure, including drinking water, wastewater systems, and safe dams.*

### **Winter Weather Preparedness Guidance:**

*Residents should check with their local officials for information about warming centers and comfort station locations. State parks with warming centers can be found [here](#). More tips are as follows:*

- Use electric space heaters with automatic shut-off switches.*
- Keep heat sources at least three feet away from furniture and drapes.*
- Insulate your home and ensure doors and windows are sealed.*
- Check and install a working carbon monoxide detector.*
- Have backup heat sources like extra blankets, sleeping bags, or a wood-burning fireplace.*
- Check your antifreeze, brakes, heater, tires, and wipers.*
- Keep your gas tank at least half full.*
- Carry an emergency Ready kit with items like a portable phone charger, ice scraper, extra blanket, sand for traction, and jumper cables.*
- Use generators outdoors and at least 20 feet from doors, windows, or vents to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning.*
- Allow pipes to drip or insulate them to prevent freezing.*
- Keep pets indoors and check on elderly or disabled relatives and neighbors.*

*For more winter weather preparedness tips, visit [gema.georgia.gov/winter](http://gema.georgia.gov/winter).*

*GEMA/HS will provide ongoing updates regarding winter weather conditions via its website ([gema.georgia.gov](http://gema.georgia.gov)) and social media accounts. Residents are encouraged to monitor local National Weather Service updates and news stations.*

*As part of the Office of the Governor, the Georgia Emergency Management and Homeland Security Agency collaborates with local, state and federal governments in partnership with private sector and non-governmental*

organizations to protect life and property against man-made and natural emergencies. GEMA/HS's Ready Georgia website and preparedness campaign provides Georgians with the knowledge needed to effectively prepare for disasters. Go to [gema.georgia.gov/plan-prepare/ready-georgia](https://gema.georgia.gov/plan-prepare/ready-georgia) for information on developing a custom emergency plan and Ready kit."

## **Office of Emergency Management and Homeland Security Agency**

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Social media post January 23, 2026:

*"The latest update from the National Weather Service includes an Ice Storm Warning for parts of Northeast Georgia from Saturday afternoon through Monday morning. Dangerous travel conditions are expected, so today is your last chance to run errands and prepare for potential power outages."*

## **American Red Cross**

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American Red Cross Georgia Region

Georgia Regional Headquarter

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[Georgia Region | American Red Cross](#)

Press release January 22, 2026:

***"Massive Winter Storm Threaten Millions Across Multiple States; Red Cross Prepares to Respond; Urges People to Get Ready Too"***

*January 22, 2026*

***Weekend storm will drop snow and ice from the Gulf Coast to the Northeast; donors needed as storm adds to strain on blood supply***

*Millions of people are in the direct path of a powerful winter storm expected to bring heavy snow, significant ice, and dangerously cold temperatures this weekend to communities from the South to the Northeast and everywhere in between.*

*Starting Friday and continuing through Monday, the storm could drop historic amounts of snow, as much as two feet in some areas. In the South, where winter storms are somewhat rare, heavy ice and freezing rain are expected. Treacherous travel conditions and long lasting power outages are likely as the bitter cold temperatures prolong the storm's impacts.*

*The American Red Cross is getting ready to help all across the area expected to see the storm's impacts. Working with partners and officials, we are organizing volunteer teams to open warming centers/shelters if needed, moving supplies ahead of the storm and prepping our Disaster Action Teams to respond remotely if necessary.*

**BLOOD DONORS NEEDED** *Meanwhile, the national blood supply remains at critically low levels. [Full details here](#). With intense winter weather and dangerously cold temperatures forecast across much of the country, the nation's blood supply faces renewed strain. In the coming days, snow, ice and freezing conditions could force widespread blood drive cancellations, leaving thousands of blood donations uncollected from Oklahoma to Maine. The Red Cross urges individuals to give blood now—before the storm hits—and encourages those in areas not impacted by severe weather to continue donating to help support patients during this critical time.*

***There's no time to wait. Book an appointment now to give blood by using the Blood Donor App, visiting [RedCrossBlood.org](https://www.redcrossblood.org) or calling 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767).***

*Snow, ice and extreme temperatures make it tougher to move vital blood products across the Red Cross network, affecting deliveries to hospitals in some locations. Ahead of the storm, the Red Cross is taking steps to reposition blood supplies in the storm's path to help ensure hospitals and patients continue to have access to critical blood when emergencies strike.*

### **HOW TO GET READY**

*People need to stay informed about the storm and get ready for possible prolonged power outages. You may have to leave your home if the power is out and you have no heat. Think about where you'll go, how you'll get there, where you'll stay and what you'll take with you.*

- *Don't forget your pets — [visit here](#) for information on keeping them safe in cold weather.*

- *Plan to reconnect with loved ones if you are separated. Write down important phone numbers on a contact card and carry it with you.*
- *Plan to stay informed by monitoring local weather and news reports even if the power goes out. Have a backup battery or another way to charge your cell phone, and a battery-powered or hand-crank radio.*

**GATHER SUPPLIES** like food, water and medicine and organize them into a go-kit and a stay-at-home kit.

- *Your go-kit should include three days of supplies that you can carry with you. Include backup batteries and chargers for your devices (cell phone, CPAP, wheelchair, etc.)*
- *Your stay-at-home kit should have two weeks of food and water, and a one-month supply of medications and medical supplies if possible.*
- *Customize your kit to meet your household's needs. If you have pets, include leashes, carriers, food, bowls, litter, litterbox and photos of you with your pet in case you're separated. If you have young children, include diapers, wipes and formula.*
- *Have a snow shovel and ice-melting products on hand to keep your walkways safe.*
- *Ensure you have enough warm clothing for everyone in your household.*
- *Consider having emergency supplies in your vehicle, such as a blanket, warm clothing, a first aid kit, and boots.*

### **HOW TO STAY SAFE**

**WINTER SAFETY:** *Stay warm indoors. If your home becomes too cold, go to a public library, shopping mall or warming center.*

- *Use care with space heaters and fireplaces to prevent fires. Keep anything that could catch fire at least 3 feet from the heat. Turn portable heaters off when you leave the room or go to sleep. [Find more information on how to heat your home safely here.](#)*
- *If you must go outside, wear layers of loose clothing, a coat, hat, mittens and water-resistant boots. Use a scarf to cover your face and mouth.*
- *Be careful walking on snow or ice and avoid overexertion when shoveling snow. If possible, work with a partner and take frequent breaks.*

**POWER OUTAGE:** *Leave one light on, so you'll know when power is restored.*

- *Use flashlights or battery-operated lanterns — not candles — to help avoid fires.*
- *Don't drive unless necessary. roads could be congested.*
- *Check with loved ones and neighbors to see if they need help.*



- *Keep food cold. When in doubt, throw it out. Keep refrigerator and freezer doors closed as much as possible to help keep food cold. Use coolers with ice if necessary. Throw out perishable food that has been warmer than 40 degrees Fahrenheit.*

**GENERATOR DO'S AND DON'TS** *Never use a generator inside. This also goes for grills, camp stoves or other gasoline, propane, natural gas or charcoal burning devices.*

- *Keep this equipment outside and away from doors, windows and vents. Carbon monoxide kills. If you start to feel sick, dizzy or weak, get to fresh air right away. Keep the generator dry and plug appliances directly into the generator. Never plug a generator into a wall outlet.*

**FROSTBITE AND HYPOTHERMIA** *Areas first affected by the cold include your nose, ears, cheeks, chin, fingers and toes.*

- *Signs of frostbite include pain, numbness or a change in skin color.*
- *Signs of hypothermia, which can be deadly, often include shivering, confusion, drowsiness and slurred speech.*
- *Act fast and get out of the cold immediately if you see signs of hypothermia or frostbite. Get emergency medical care right away.*

**FROZEN PIPES** *Pipes that freeze most frequently are outdoor lines, pipes in unheated interior areas like basements and crawl spaces, attics, garages, or kitchen cabinets, and pipes that run against exterior walls that have little or no insulation.*

- *Open kitchen and bathroom cabinet doors to allow warmer air to circulate around the plumbing.*
- *Let the cold water drip from the faucet served by exposed pipes.*
- *Remove, drain, and store hoses. Close inside valves supplying outdoor hose bibs.*
- *Keep garage doors closed if there are water supply lines in the garage.*

*Download the free Red Cross First Aid app so you'll know what to do if emergency help is delayed and the free Emergency app for weather alerts, open Red Cross shelter locations and safety steps for different emergencies. Choose whether you want to view the content in English or Spanish with an easy-to-find language selector. Find these and all of the Red Cross apps in smartphone app stores by searching for the American Red Cross or going to [redcross.org/apps](https://redcross.org/apps).*

**Open Shelters: None at this time**

To view an updated list of shelters, visit [Disaster Shelters](#) | [Find Shelters](#) | [American Red Cross](#)

## **Department of Transportation**

GDOT: Georgia Department of Transportation

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Press release January 22, 2026:

### ***“Georgia DOT Activates Winter Weather Response Plans, Urges Motorists to Stay Off Roads as Winter Weather Expected This Weekend***

**ATLANTA** – Following Georgia Governor Brian Kemp’s issuance of a state of emergency in advance of winter weather expected to impact much of the state in the coming days, the Georgia Department of Transportation (Georgia DOT) is actively preparing and positioning crews and equipment and is urging motorists to prepare now as crews take proactive steps to address potentially hazardous road conditions.

*Beginning at midnight Friday night into Saturday, Georgia DOT crews will start pre-treating interstate highways across north Georgia by applying brine to help prevent ice from bonding to the pavement. Georgia DOT maintains nearly two million gallons of brine statewide and has the capacity to replenish supplies by producing up to 50,000 gallons of brine per hour as needed.*

*Motorists are strongly encouraged to plan ahead and avoid travel during brining operations to give crews the space they need to safely and effectively apply treatment materials. Brine operations will continue around the clock, and crews will continuously monitor roadway conditions and treat as needed throughout the duration of the event.*

*In addition to interstates, Georgia DOT crews will also pre-treat state routes, with priority given to corridors serving hospitals and urgent care facilities to help maintain access for emergency and essential travel.*

*Snowplow teams from south Georgia will begin deploying Friday to support existing crews in north Georgia, where impacts are expected to be greatest.*



*To help mitigate potential issues involving stranded motorists, stalled vehicles, or crashes, Georgia DOT's HERO (Highway Emergency Response Operators) and CHAMP (Coordinated Highway Assistance and Maintenance Patrol) units will begin 24-hour patrols on interstates starting at 7 a.m. Saturday. Patrol efforts will primarily focus on Interstate 20 and routes northward.*

*Due to the relative uncertainty surrounding weather impacts, the potential for freezing rain or ice across much of the region, and the increased risk of motorists becoming stranded, involved in crashes, or encountering falling trees, limbs, or power lines on roadways, Georgia DOT strongly recommends that motorists plan to stay home and off the roads during this time if at all possible. While Georgia DOT crews will be working around the clock to treat interstates and state routes, ice is among the most difficult and dangerous roadway conditions to manage.*

*Georgia DOT remains in close coordination with the Georgia Emergency Management and Homeland Security Agency (GEMA/HS) and the National Weather Service (NWS) and will continue monitoring forecasts and roadway conditions statewide.*

*Motorists are urged not to travel, but those who must travel should use extreme caution and consult 511GA for up-to-the-minute traffic conditions, road closures, and travel advisories. Information is available by calling 511, visiting [511ga.org](https://www.511ga.org), or using the 511GA mobile app.*

*For additional updates, visit [www.dot.ga.gov](https://www.dot.ga.gov) or follow Georgia DOT on social media."*

## **United Way/211 Information and Referrals Lines**

These information and referral lines may know of additional resources currently providing assistance, such as food pantries, clothing closets, emergency shelters, and agencies offering financial assistance. Please dial 2-1-1 and provide your zip code and demographic information in order to receive referrals. Information can also be obtained at [Call 211 for Essential Community Services | United Way 211](#).

United Ways of Georgia  
Dial 2-1-1 or (404) 527-7200  
Text your zip code to 898-211  
[211 – United Ways of Georgia](#)

## **Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)**

(800) 621-3362  
[FEMA.gov](https://www.fema.gov)

Please visit the website and click on “*Disaster Declarations*”. If a disaster is declared, please call to apply for assistance by phone, or visit: [Individual Assistance | FEMA.gov](#) to apply online.

## **DisasterAssistance.gov**

[Home | disasterassistance.gov](#)

Offers information about local resources for disasters, including: FEMA Disaster Recovery Centers (DRCs), Red Cross, food, shelter, state emergency management agencies, and hospital locators.

To determine if individual disaster assistance is available through FEMA, please visit the website and enter the address.

To locate your local state emergency management agency for disaster information and updates, please visit: [Search Your Location | FEMA.gov](#)

## **American Red Cross National**

(800) 733-2767

[American Red Cross | Help Those Affected by Disasters](#)

## **National Weather Service**

Weather alerts by state are available at: [Active Alerts \(weather.gov\)](#).

## **The Weather Channel**

Local forecasts and severe weather.

[National and Local Weather Radar, Daily Forecast, Hurricane and information from The Weather Channel and weather.com.](#)

## **Safe Travel USA**

[SafeTravelUSA](#)

## **National Traffic And Road Closure Information**

[National Traffic and Road Closure Information | Federal Highway Administration \(dot.gov\)](#)

## **Free Help Line**

Optum, a leading health and behavioral health services company, is offering a free emotional-support help line.

The toll-free number, 866-447-3573, will be open Monday-Friday, 8am-8pm CST. The service is free of charge and open to anyone. Specially trained Optum mental health specialists help people manage their stress and anxiety so they can continue to address their everyday needs. Callers may also receive referrals to community resources to help them with specific concerns, including financial and legal matters.

Along with the toll-free help line, emotional-support resources and information are available online at <https://www.liveandworkwell.com>.