



STATE OF OHIO

Emergency Operations Center

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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

For more information:

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January 6, 2005
2:30 p.m.

Severe Winter Weather Update # 1 *Ohio Snow and Ice Storms, Flooding*

COLUMBUS, Ohio – The State of Ohio Emergency Operations Center was activated at 9 a.m. today to enable state and volunteer agencies to coordinate efforts in responding to and assessing damage from the statewide severe snow storms and heavy rains.

The northwest corner of Ohio experienced severe snow storms. Other parts of northern Ohio experienced severe freezing rain and ice storms. The central and southern portion of the state weathered heavy, continual rains and flooding. Eighteen counties declared local emergencies: Auglaize, Allen, Ashland, Athens, Butler, Champaign, Coshocton, Darke, Fairfield, Hocking, Holmes, Licking, Logan, Marion, Mercer, Morgan, Perry and Washington.

The Ohio Emergency Management Agency, Ohio Department of Public Safety, Ohio State Highway Patrol, Ohio Department of Transportation, Ohio Environmental Protection Agency, Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Ohio Department of Agriculture, ODOT-Aviation, Ohio Department of Administrative Services, Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, Public Utilities Commission of Ohio and the Columbus Chapter of the American Red Cross are currently staffing the EOC and monitoring the situation across the state.

“We intend to supply resources to local agencies as they are needed and ensure coordination at all levels,” said Dale Shipley, executive director of the Ohio Emergency Management Agency. “We are dealing with extreme weather conditions throughout the state and are encouraged by the strong local response to these events.”

STATE AGENCY ACTIVITIES

ODOT has 503 crews working throughout the state and reported 146 state, county and township road closures. ODOT will continue to assist with snow and ice removal in northern Ohio.

OSHP is continuing to help with traffic control and road closures throughout affected jurisdictions. The Patrol also reported that 14 barges were loose on the Ohio River near Belmont County. Two barges struck a bridge near West Virginia; no damage reported to bridge; all 14 were eventually caught.

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PUCO reported the following power outages:

Dayton Power & Light – 50,000 customers without power

Cenergy – No outages in Ohio, but 30,000 in Indiana, due to ice

FirstEnergy – 109,000 customers without power

Cleveland Electric Illuminating – 5,000 customers without power

American Electric Power – 57,248 customers without power in 10 to 15 counties

Ohio Rural Co-op reported 10 co-ops with major outages.

AEP and FirstEnergy will perform a helicopter fly-over to inspect electrical transformers across the state.

Baltimore Gas and Electric (Maryland) is sending crews to assist FirstEnergy with power restoration.

Ohio EMA is working with counties to determine if state assistance is needed. Field liaisons are assisting county EMA directors with preliminary damage assessments and other county needs in Coshocton, Crawford, Lawrence and Warren counties. Madison County requested and received sandbags to prevent flood damage.

ODNR dispatched water rescue crews to McConnelsville in Morgan County to help rescue 10 families from the rising waters. During this disaster, ODNR Division of Water has assisted with four rescue missions.

The **Red Cross** reports shelters are open in Allen, Butler, Champaign, Darke, Fairfield, Franklin, Hamilton, Holmes, Logan, Miami, Muskingum, Portage and Ross counties. The Ohio Exposition Center in Columbus opened early this morning, and the Tolles Technical Center in Plain City is on standby. Red Cross counselors are on staff at shelters to assist with medical needs. Caseworkers are also available to help families assess their emergency needs such as food, clothing and shelter.

Those without power and seeking shelter should call their local chapter of the American Red Cross or county emergency management agency.

For more winter weather safety tips, log onto: www.ema.ohio.gov/PDFs/Severe_Weather/Winter2004.pdf

For up-to-date information on road closures, visit: www.buckeyetraffic.org

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