

Media Release

February 26, 2013

8:00 am

From the Offices of:

Emergency Management – Martina Pounds – (573) 489-4945

County of Boone – Presiding Commissioner Dan Atwill – (573) 268-6847

City of Columbia – Steven Sapp – (573) 239-5335

Boone County Fire Protection District – Division Chief Gale Bloomenkamp – (573) 219-0677

## **Second Major Winter Storm in a Week is Impacting Columbia and Boone County**

### **Local Governments and Emergency Services Urge People to Stay Off Roads and to Watch for Downed Power Lines and Trees**

The second major winter storm in a week is spreading heavy wet snow across all of Boone County this morning. Boone County, the City of Columbia, and emergency officials are urging the public to stay off roads Tuesday.

The National Weather Service has issued a Winter Storm Warning for Columbia and Boone County and is forecasting between 6 and 10 inches of total snowfall through Tuesday afternoon.

#### **Travel:**

- Do not travel unless essential. MoDOT has issued a “No Travel Advisory” for the entire state of Missouri
- If your vehicle becomes stranded and is in the driving lane(s), it will be towed at the owner’s expense; there will not be grace period.
- For non-injury crashes, drivers should call the non-emergency Law Enforcement number at 573-442-6131
- Road crews report about 6 inches of heavy wet snow on the ground and roads are slick.

#### **Situational Status:**

- Emergency Medical System

- Hospitals are reporting adequate personnel on duty and no issues.
- Hospitals have staffed six additional ambulances and stationed them around Boone County for emergent responses.
- Fire
  - Reporting steady call volume
  - Adequate personnel and equipment to respond to all calls.
  - Using a number of 4-wheel drive vehicles to assist with responses.
  - Representative from Fire services are at Public Safety Joint Communications assisting with prioritizing calls and resource management.
- Public Works / Road Crews
  - Both City of Columbia and Boone County Public Works crews are out and plowing roadways. City of Columbia concentrating on 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> priority roads. County concentrating on major county roads.
  - Both crews assisting with trucks and chain saws to clear tree limbs and tress from roadways.

#### **Government Operations:**

- City Offices will be closed on Tuesday.
- County of Boone
  - Boone County Offices are closed on Tuesday
  - Boone County Courts are closed on Tuesday

#### **Utilities**

- City of Columbia
  - As of 8:00 am 1,500 outages reported and crews are responding to calls. At the peak of outage reports, there were about 4,00 customers without power.
  - Report lines down or outages to (573) 875-2555. Additional personnel are answering phones so please be patient.
- Boone Electric
  - As of 8:00 am, 3,000 customers are reported without power and crews are responding to calls.
  - Report lines down or outages to (573) 449-4181. Additional personnel are answering phones so please be patient.

#### **Safety**

- **Lines down**
  - Do not approach any line on the ground or hanging from a utility pole. Report all lines down to Columbia Water and Light or Boone Electric Coop. If a line is arcing, if a line is on a structure or vehicle, or there is visible smoke or fire, call 9-1-1.

- Should someone come in contact with a live electrical line, do not touch them! Call 9-1-1 and stay clear of the line and the person.
- Electric lines are normally the lines at the top of the pole. Cable and phone lines are lower on the pole but do not make assumptions.
- **Generators**
  - Safety information concerning generators can be found at this link - <http://www.usfa.fema.gov/downloads/pdf/fswy24.pdf>
- **Health**
  - This is a heavy and wet snow. Make sure you are in good physical condition before attempting shovel snow.
  - If while shoveling you feel a tightness in your chest, sweating and/or nausea; stop and call 9-1-1.
- **Private Services**
  - Towing services
    - Ensure you get a price agreement before the tow is stated.
    - If you feel you are a victim of price gouging, call the Missouri State Attorney Generals Hotline at 1-800-392-8222
  - Tree and limb removal
    - Ensure you are working with a reputable company and agree upon a price, in writing, before work is begun.
    - It is not certain that the Federal Emergency Management Agency will reimburse you for the cost – a disaster declaration has not been issued.
    - If you feel you are a victim of price gouging, call the Missouri State Attorney Generals Hotline at 1-800-392-8222
- **Social Media**
  - Information can be reported via the following sites:
    - Our links for Emergency Management are:
      - Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/BooneCountyOEM>
      - Twitter: <http://www.twitter.com/BooneCountyOEM>
    - City of Columbia
      - Public Works
        - Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/ColumbiaMissouriPublicWorks>
        - Twitter: [http://twitter.com/pub\\_works](http://twitter.com/pub_works)
      - City of Columbia main page
        - <https://www.facebook.com/pages/City-of-Columbia-Missouri-Govt-Page/115811635186687>
        - <https://twitter.com/GoColumbiaMO>

Again, emergency management officials and local government officials are stressing no travel unless essential to avoid the issues experienced last week when hundreds of motorists and cars were stranded in Columbia and Boone County. Staying off the roadways will allow plowing crews from MoDOT, Boone County, and the City of Columbia to complete their work and it will assist in keeping roadways clear for emergency services such as law enforcement, fire, and EMS as well as utility service vehicles responding to any power outages.