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Press Release

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[Bridges & Tunnels](#)

IMMEDIATE

MTA Bridges And Tunnels Prepared For Winter

With 9,000 tons of deicer on hand and a fleet of 98 snow and ice-fighting vehicles standing by, MTA Bridges and Tunnels is ready for wind, snow and ice from the approaching storm.

If wind speeds on wet or icy roadways are between 30 mph and 49 mph, MTA Bridges and Tunnels may implement Phase I restrictions by asking motorists to reduce speeds to 25 mph. If wind speeds reach 50 mph or above, MTA Bridges and Tunnels may implement Phase II restrictions by barring tractor-trailers, house trailers, cars pulling trailers, step vans, minibuses, motorcycles and other vulnerable vehicles from bridges. MTA Bridges and Tunnels may also close bridges during sustained high winds of 60 mph or more.

The agency got a bit of practice thanks to an early storm that coated parts of the metropolitan area region with several inches of snow on Nov. 7. Last year, MTA Bridges and Tunnels crews battled four storms, and were successful in keeping all nine MTA crossings open. Crews used a total of 1,400 tons of deicer, towed dozens of stranded drivers and removed cars abandoned during snow events from MTA toll plazas.

MTA Bridges and Tunnels' snow procedures will be in effect during any storm. With a light storm event of less than 3 inches of snow, motorists will be asked to drive at reduced speeds. When the accumulation of snow or a mixture of snow and ice is above 3 inches, some roadway lanes or ramps may be closed for snow removal and deicing. In blizzard conditions, which may include whiteout conditions combining snow, high winds and/or ice, bridges, tunnels and entrance and exit ramps at all MTA crossings may be closed for the safety of motorists and employees.

The agency's four suspension bridges—the Robert F. Kennedy, Verrazano-Narrows, Bronx-Whitestone and Throgs Neck—may also be intermittently closed after an ice/snow event when ice or snow begins to melt from the bridge's suspender cables, creating potentially hazardous driving conditions.

"We understand the inconvenience caused when we close a bridge but we ask drivers to understand that it is done to insure their safety, which is our highest priority," said Bridges and Tunnels Vice President and Chief of Operations James Fortunato.

Bridges and Tunnel's snow fleet is made up of regular maintenance trucks that are turned into snow plows and conveyors. The fleet includes 45 vehicles equipped with ground temperature sensors that tell personnel if the roadway is in danger of freezing. The operator then spreads additional deicer where it is needed.

The Authority's bridges also are equipped with imbedded roadway sensors and above-ground atmospheric sensors that deliver real-time information on wind velocity, wind direction, humidity and precipitation. These sensors record data used to determine if speed restrictions are necessary.

"We use every technology available to battle winter storms and keep our bridges and tunnels as safe as possible for the 800,000 motorists who depend on us daily," said Bridges and Tunnels Chief Maintenance Officer Patrick Parisi.