

## STATE JOINT INFORMATION CENTER

# NEWS



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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**JANUARY 27, 2000 1:00 P.M.**

**SUBJECT: GOV. MUSGROVE DECLARES EMERGENCY**

(JACKSON) – Gov. Ronnie Musgrove this morning declared a state of emergency for Mississippi in connection with a winter storm that is now moving into the state.

Conditions are expected to deteriorate throughout the afternoon period, with heavy snowfall, freezing rain and sleet throughout most of the state. In extreme South Mississippi, the potential for severe thunderstorms exists although severe winter weather is not expected below a line from Natchez to Laurel.

"We are in constant contact with the staff at the Emergency Management Agency and with incoming Director Robert Latham to be sure that we are doing everything humanly possible to prepare for this winter storm and to respond quickly," said Gov. Ronnie Musgrove. "Every emergency response agency is on standby and is ready to respond. Our primary concern is the safety welfare of the people of Mississippi."

In addition, Gov. Musgrove also issued an executive order authorizing Adjutant General George S. Walker to place Mississippi National Guard troops on state active duty. A limited number of Guardsmen have already been placed on duty at the emergency operations center, and the order allows for the rapid deployment of additional Guardsmen should it become necessary as deemed appropriate by MEMA.

Earlier this morning, Gov. Musgrove also issued a memorandum to state agency executive directors authorizing administrative leave for state employees at agency head discretion.

Additionally, Attorney General Mike Moore, through the Division of Consumer Protection, reports that when a state of emergency is declared, prices for goods and services cannot exceed the prices ordinarily charged for the same goods and services 24 hours prior to the declaration. Price gouging during a state of emergency is illegal and could result in fines and jail time.

At release time, the Mississippi Department of Transportation reports that ice is forming on the I-20 bridge over the Big Black River. Surface treatments, such as spreading sand or aggregate on icy areas, on the bridge are being conducted by MDOT crews and traffic is moving over the bridge. Also, surface treatments are taking place on the Hwy. 22 bridge over I-20 at Edwards - traffic at that site is moving also. In the Brookhaven area, sanding operations are underway on I-55 and U.S. Hwy. 84. No other road problems have been reported so far. However, some local bridges and roads may be closed by local governments. Motorists are urged to limit travel if possible. If traveling, please remember to wear seatbelts and turn on headlights, and use slower speeds. MDOT urges motorists traversing bridges to coast across them - take your foot off the gas and do not apply your brakes to minimize the risk of skid. If you do skid, don't apply brakes and do turn into the direction of the skid to recover.

The Mississippi Highway Patrol has established its road condition hotline. For information regarding the current status of state highways, people may call 987-1211 (local Jackson number with general information) or 1-888-728-4218 for road information about specific areas of the state. The information can also be viewed by visiting the MHP website at [www.dps.state.ms.us](http://www.dps.state.ms.us).

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