Driving Zero Fatalities to a Reality

At the Illinois Department of Transportation, safety is our number one priority and we stand committed to reducing the number of fatalities to zero on Illinois roadways.

Please help us by driving defensively, buckling up, putting down your cell phone, slowing down in work zones, wearing the proper gear while motorcycling, and designating a sober driver if you have been drinking.

Driving Zero Fatalities to a Reality is our message. Every life counts. With your help, we will ensure we are doing everything we can to save lives.

2014 Illinois Roadway Fatalities to Date

848

Lost & Found

Any lost and found items you may find should be brought to the attention of your supervisor immediately. Items should be sealed in an envelope. Once the information is complete the envelope should be placed in the lost and found bin in the office to be picked up by Lee or Stephanie.

We Honored

Sunset on Monday, Nov. 17, 2014

In recognition of the lives that were lost and the devastation that occurred as a result of the tornadoes that struck Illinois one year ago.

In Remembrance of:
Mayor Jane Byrne, City of Chicago

What is This?
The ‘What is This’ photo shown in this edition is a close up of a milk weed seed pod after it has burst open and just before the seed parachutes or ‘fluff’ take flight on a stiff breeze. The silk or fluff is nature’s way of redistributing the plants seed either by wind transport, by animal transport or by curious observers who want to watch the seeds blow away when the pods are shaken.

Milkweed silk also has uses. In Pioneer times the fluff was used as stuffing for mattresses and pillows, used for insulation in garments and woven into thread used to make socks and underwear. During World War II there was a campaign, mainly by schoolchildren to collect milkweed seed pods and silks. The silks from the seed pods were used in life jackets and outerwear for the United States Air Force.
How Fast IS the Wind Blowing?

A common issue throughout all of our rest areas for our rest area workers is, when is it too windy for our flags to be flying and when should we take them down? All of our rest area contracts indicate flags should be taken down when the wind speed reaches 20 miles per hour (mph). In an effort to better explain how to determine the wind speed we did some research and found the guide below very helpful.

The Beaufort scale was devised in 1805 by Francis Beaufort, then an officer in the Irish Royal Navy (later he became Rear Admiral Sir Francis Beaufort) as a way to standardize wind speed measurements. Beaufort’s original scale (zero to 12) did not include wind speed numbers but related the wind conditions to the effects on ships sails. In 1916 the scale was adapted to include land observations. Easy to follow guides were later added by others. Today many countries use a metric scale for wind measurements, however, the severe weather warnings given by the National Weather Service in the United States are still approximately the same as when using the Beaufort scale.

Below is an example of a Beaufort scale with observation descriptions. Pay careful attention to the observations section and notice scale number 6, “strong breeze,” with winds or greater workers should take the flags down before they begin beating or whipping in the wind.

Copies of the Beaufort scale will be delivered to each rest area and posted in the office area. Supervisors should review the scale with all workers, especially lead workers and make sure they understand when the flags need to be taken down. As always, flags should be lowered immediately once the wind speed becomes too strong and should be returned to proper staff height once the wind speed drops. It is not necessary to wait until the next shift or the next day to re-fly the flags. Your careful attention to when to remove and when to return the flags helps us keep our flags in better condition longer and helps avoid questions from concerned citizens. As always, if you have any questions feel free to ask Lee or Stephanie. Information for this article was gathered from the National Weather Service and NOAA websites.

Basic Beaufort Scale with Wind Speed (MPH) and Observations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Beaufort Number</th>
<th>Wind Speed (MPH)</th>
<th>Observation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>Less than 1</td>
<td>Calm. Smoke rises vertically.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 - 3</td>
<td>Smoke drift indicates wind direction. Leaves and weather vanes are still.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>4 - 7</td>
<td>Wind felt on exposed skin. Leaves begin to rustle.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>8 - 12</td>
<td>Leaves and small twigs constantly moving.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>13 - 17</td>
<td>Dust and loose paper raised. Small branches begin to move. Flags flap.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>18 - 24</td>
<td>Branches of a moderate size move. Small trees in leaf begin to sway.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>31 - 38</td>
<td>Whole trees in motion. Effort needed to walk against the wind.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>39 - 46</td>
<td>Flags extend. Some twigs broken from trees. Cars veer on road. Progress on foot is difficult.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>47 - 54</td>
<td>Some branches break off trees. Some small trees blow over.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>55 - 63</td>
<td>Trees are broken off or uprooted. Structural damage likely.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>64 - 73</td>
<td>Widespread vegetation and structural damage likely.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Greater than 74</td>
<td>Severe widespread damage to vegetation and structures. Debris and unsecured objects are hurled about.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Welcome Patty

Many of you have already met Patty who is working with Rest Areas and Landscape this winter on a temporary winter assignment. Patty will be helping Lee and Stephanie with rest area inspections, maintenance issues and helping handle regular questions and calls.

Patty has a degree in Construction Technology from Parkland College and comes to us from Project Implementation and regularly works in our District Materials Lab during the construction season. In addition to her time at DOT Patty has also worked in and around our region in highway construction and for cities and villages. Patty is quickly getting up to speed on rest area operations. Please introduce yourself when you see her out and about and please give her a hand as she learns about our rest areas, especially trying to learn all of your names and your schedules!

New “Closed” Signs

Most of you probably noticed the new “Sorry, Closed” yellow signs that were installed at Illini Prairie, Salt Kettle and that are still up at Funks Grove rest area. These news signs along with an additional sign indicating when we expect the rest area will re-open will now be installed on the big, blue One Mile and ½ Mile rest area signs by our District 5 Sign Shop crew whenever we expect to have a closure of a few weeks or more. The Sign Shop will also be removing the regular “Closed” signs, repairing them and re-installing them on the signs. Once re-installed, these closed signs will be used during short closures or until the bigger signs can be installed by the Sign Shop.

In addition to these signs we are also working on a design for signs to be used at all rest areas to inform travelers that the building is closed. The new “Building Closed” signs can be put up by rest area staff, right outside of the building entrances when the building is closed and until the ramps can be closed. This will prevent travelers having to park and walk all the way to the building to see the small “Building Closed” signs we now have and post in the windows.

Hopefully we won’t need to use them often, but once we have the new “Building Closed” signs for each rest area we will cover how, when and where we want them to be used and how and where they should be stored when not in use.

Salt Kettle and Illini Prairie Open!

Salt Kettle rest area opened to the public on Wednesday, November, 19th and both Illini Prairie north bound and south bound rest areas opened on Tuesday, November 25th. The construction contractors still have some minor repairs to make but all three rest areas are now fully open.

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Below is an example of a Beaufort scale with observation descriptions. Pay careful attention to the observations section and notice scale number 4 indicates “moderate breeze,” with winds measured at 13 to 17 MPH and the observation “flags flap.” Using this scale and applying our rule for lowering the flags at wind speeds 20 MPH or greater workers should take the flags down before they begin beating or whipping in the wind.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>Calm</td>
<td>Less than 1</td>
<td>Calm. Smoke rises vertically.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Light Air</td>
<td>1 - 3</td>
<td>Smoke drift indicates wind direction. Leaves and weather vanes are still.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Light Breeze</td>
<td>4 - 7</td>
<td>Wind felt on exposed skin. Leaves begin to rustle.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Gentle Breeze</td>
<td>8 - 12</td>
<td>Leaves and small twigs constantly moving.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Moderate Breeze</td>
<td>13 - 17</td>
<td>Dust and loose paper raised. Small branches begin to move. Flags flap.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Fresh Breeze</td>
<td>18 - 24</td>
<td>Branches of a moderate size move. Small trees in leaf begin to sway.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Strong Breeze</td>
<td>25 - 30</td>
<td>Flags beat. Large branches in motion. Umbrella use becomes difficult. Empty plastic bins tip over, white caps on water.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>High Wind</td>
<td>31 - 38</td>
<td>Whole trees in motion. Effort needed to walk against the wind.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Gale</td>
<td>39 - 46</td>
<td>Flags extend. Some twigs broken from trees. Cars veer on road. Progress on foot is difficult.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Strong Gale</td>
<td>47 - 54</td>
<td>Some branches break off trees, and some small trees blow over.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Storm</td>
<td>55 - 63</td>
<td>Trees are broken off or uprooted, structural damage likely.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Violent Storm</td>
<td>64 - 73</td>
<td>Widespread vegetation and structural damage likely.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Hurricane Force</td>
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Safety Inspections

With the onset of cold weather all of our offices and mechanical rooms tend to quickly fill up with extra clothing, boots, hats and gloves; extra ice melt and snow removal equipment, salt spreaders, ice scrapers and snow shovels; all of this in addition to lunch boxes, paper storage, used and new mop heads, cleaning equipment, cleaning supplies and all of the other items that tend to accumulate.

No doubt all of the above are needed items and useful tools that need to be kept near at hand and most of our mechanical rooms and offices are lacking on storage space, but it is absolutely important to store and organize items in a safe and neat manner so that safety items, electrical panels and doors can be reached and accessed. The below list isn’t meant to be a complete list to conduct safety checks but it is a good starting point for all workers and supervisors. The items and topics listed below should be reviewed daily during each shift and by all workers and any problems should be corrected immediately or brought to the attention of your supervisor or IDOT.

Things to check daily:

• Is there at least three (3) feet clearance in front of electrical panels and breaker boxes?
• Are all corridors, exit doors and routes clear of obstructions inside and out?
• Can all exit doors be fully opened?
• Is emergency equipment (eye washes and first aid boxes) accessible and not blocked by equipment?
• Is there at least two (2) feet clearance between stacked materials and ceiling lights, heat vents, pipes, etc.?
• Are all fire extinguishers unobstructed and properly mounted with signs clearly visible?
• Are all work areas maintained with good housekeeping?
• Are all chemicals properly labeled?
• Is damaged or malfunctioning equipment tagged “OUT OF SERVICE”?
• Is all emergency equipment in good condition?

Your careful attention to keeping mechanical rooms and offices clean, neat and organized will help keep everyone safe, will promote a safer work environment and will help eliminate the need to move or shuffle personal items and equipment anytime there is an emergency or when IDOT or our contractors need to do work at the facility.