

Local agencies gear up for coming storm



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PORTLAND, Ore. - TriMet chained up its fleet of buses and the city of Portland sent out three de-icing trucks Friday in a race to prepare the city for the coming storm.

Each de-icing truck holds 500 gallons of de-icer, and they slathered the roads with it in Portland's higher elevations and emergency routes Friday night.

But they've also "been out the last couple of days putting de-icing down on bridges and overpasses, and more hillier terrains of the region," Portland Mayor Sam Adams said in a news conference where he stressed the importance of agencies working together as a team during this storm.

"We'll have more than 120 maintenance workers on staff this weekend alone to prepare for whatever we have to do to make the roads as clear as we can," said Dave Thompson of the Oregon Department of Transportation.

Portland City Commissioner Nick Fish said the city and county have activated their system to ensure there is a place for people to go for warmth.

"Last night 1,600 people slept outside," Fish said. "We estimate 2,500 people are at risk during winter weather."

He said if someone needs a place to sleep they can dial 2-1-1 during the day and 503-721-1500 after-hours.

"No one will be denied into the shelter," he said.

From ensuring warming shelters stay open to keeping the streets safe, Adams said the primary concern is life and safety.

"Be prepared," he said. "As I've said before, keep a good eye out for your neighbors, your family, and yourselves."

Additionally, TriMet chained up their buses with the goal of keeping public transportation moving, but spokeswoman Mary Fetsch said buses won't be on schedule.

"We have a mantra at TriMet: safety over schedules," she said. "We'll pull out first thing Saturday with chains on everything. That means the maximum speed is 25 mph."

Adams said an improvement over last year is a Web site the agencies are using called PublicAlerts.org.

It gives the public information on utility updates and traffic alerts. Residents can also enter their home address to see which roads have been plowed near them.