



## **SNOW EMERGENCY INFORMATION SHEET**

### Purpose of a Snow Emergency:

The purpose of a snow emergency is to warn the public of dangerous road conditions and assist county and state highway departments in keeping roadways clear.

### Authority to Declare a Snow Emergency:

Pursuant to Ohio Revised Code Section 311.07 and 311.08, the county Sheriff may declare a snow emergency and temporarily close all or certain highways, road and streets within his or her jurisdiction when such action is reasonably necessary for the preservation of the public peace. This authority includes all federal and state highways, county, township and municipal streets and roadways.

Any person, who knowingly hampers or fails to obey a lawful order of the Sheriff declaring a snow emergency and temporarily closing roadways within his or her jurisdiction, may be subject to criminal prosecution under Ohio Revised Code section 2917.13 MISCONDUCT AT AN EMERGENCY.

### SNOW LEVEL CLASSIFICATIONS:

A Snow Alert Declaration by the Fayette County Sheriff is designed to advise motorists of hazardous road conditions created by ice, blowing and drifting snow. No roadways are closed, although unnecessary travel is discouraged but if deemed necessary, extreme caution is urged. Generally, snow is accumulating on the roadway with dropping temperatures may create dangerous road surfaces. A snow alert is a LEVEL ONE classification.

#### **Snow Alert – LEVEL ONE** Declaration (Sample Language)

“A snow alert has been declared by Fayette County Sheriff Vernon Stanforth. Due to conditions caused by ice, blowing and drifting snow, Fayette County roadways are hazardous. This declaration includes *<one of the following conditions will apply>* (a) all county, township, city and state roadways, or (b) the following roadways in Fayette County.. Caution should be used in traveling Fayette County roadways. Give yourself adequate travel time and allow more distance between vehicles.”

A Snow Advisory is a Level Two classification advising motorists that all or certain roadways in Fayette County are hazardous with icy spots, blowing and drifting snow causing low visibility. Only persons who deem it necessary to travel should be on the roadways. The Fayette County Sheriff’s Office urges extreme caution. Employees should contact their employer to determine if they should report to work.

**Snow Advisory – LEVEL TWO** Declaration (Sample Language)

“A level two Snow Advisory has been declared by Fayette County Sheriff Vernon Stanforth. Ice and blowing and drifting snow have caused low visibility on Fayette County roadways. Due to hazardous driving conditions *<one of the following conditions will apply>* (a) all roadways in Fayette County have been closed. This closure affects all state, county, township, and city roadways; (b) the following roadways in Fayette County have been closed...(c) No roadways are closed but extreme caution should be exercised”.

Only persons who deem it necessary to travel should be on the roadways. Extreme caution is urged. ***Employees should contact their employer to determine if they should report to work.***

A snow emergency is declared when ice, blowing and drifting snow has created extremely hazardous road conditions. Low visibility, extremely low temperatures, and worsening road conditions have caused the closing of all or certain Fayette County roadways to all but emergency and essential persons. No one should be on the roadways unless absolutely necessary. Employees should contact their employers to see if they should report for work. All non-emergency and non-essential persons traveling the roadways during the LEVEL THREE snow emergency may be subject to criminal prosecution under Ohio Revised Code section 2917.13 for misconduct at an emergency.

**Snow Emergency – LEVEL THREE** Declaration (Sample Language)

“A level three snow emergency has been declared by Fayette County Sheriff Vernon Stanforth. Due to extremely hazardous conditions caused by ice, and blowing and drifting snow, *<one of the following conditions will apply>* (a) all roadways in Fayette County or (b) the following roadways in Fayette County are closed. This declaration is in effect for the listed roadways only. Travel on these roadways is limited to emergency and essential personnel only. No one should be on these roadways during the duration of this snow emergency unless absolutely necessary. All employees should contact their employer to determine if they should report for work. All non-emergency and non-essential personnel traveling the roadways during this snow emergency may be subject to arrest and criminal prosecution under section 2917.13 of the Ohio Revised Code for “Misconduct at an emergency”.

**Essential Personnel**

The definition, in part of essential is something necessary, fundamental, indispensable or unavoidable.

*The Fayette County Sheriff's Office is without the authority to arbitrarily determine what occupations, job descriptions or duties constitute essential or non-essential employees.* Persons who claim to be en route to or from work or any other legitimate errand or business are to be given full benefit of doubt when considering the filing of charges of misconduct at an emergency. It is the intent of Ohio Revised Code section 2917.13 to control bystanders, curiosity seekers, thrill seekers and anyone else, who without good reason, generally interferes during an emergency, or anyone who fails or otherwise ignores a reasonable order of a law enforcement officer at or during an emergency. In most cases, persons violating section 2917.13 will be issued a citation as a summons to appear in court. When the law enforcement officer deems it necessary to arrest an individual, the arrest will only be made in the event the person refuses, ignores, or otherwise fails to obey the order to cease in the interference, or when there are other violations of the Ohio Revised Code that would, under normal circumstances, warrant an arrest.