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February 13, 2014

CATAWBA COUNTY RESIDENTS CAUTIONED NOT TO TRAVEL THURSDAY EVENING UNLESS ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY; THANKED FOR BENEFITS OF THEIR NOT TRAVELLING TODAY

Catawba County Emergency Management officials are warning citizens to stay home and off roads on Thursday evening, February 13 and Friday morning, February 14, as any melting of snow that may have occurred on Thursday will re-freeze overnight and widespread "black ice" is expected on Friday morning.

"We are very grateful to everyone who has stayed off the roads today and enjoyed this snow day from home!, said Karyn Yaussy, Catawba County Emergency Management Coordinator. "It is a big help to emergency responders because it keeps them safer while dealing with emergencies, and a big help to North Carolina Department Of Transportation and municipal road crews as they attempt to clear roads. It is much easier and more efficient to clear a road when there is no traffic on it. I truly believe the cooperation we received with people staying home on Wednesday and Thursday is why we have had a low incidence of serious wrecks, injuries and fatalities. *Stay Home, Stay Safe works!*"

Yaussy reported that very many secondary and some primary roads were still treacherous on Thursday afternoon.

"We received 10+ inches of snow in most areas of the county and that is a lot for nearly all vehicles to go through," Yaussy added. "Even in places that received significant sunshine on Thursday afternoon turned deep snow into deep, slippery slush. Even heavy 4x4 vehicles were getting stuck or sliding."

Places that were melting in this afternoon's sun will refreeze after sunset Thursday night. We encourage everyone to please stay home this evening," Yaussy concluded. "And we expect a widespread problem with black ice (thin ice that may not be quickly seen but can be very treacherous) on Friday morning. If you must travel to work tomorrow morning use extreme caution, slow down and leave a whole lot of space between you and other vehicles. The list of closings for Friday was growing on Thursday afternoon, so before you leave home for any reason, please check to make sure your destination is actually open and operational."

Catawba County response agencies including Catawba County Emergency Services, fire, rescue, EMS, and law enforcement, as well as North Carolina Highway Patrol troopers, National Guard soldiers, and other crews have been checking all abandoned cars to make sure there are no people inside who need help. Road crews are continuing to work to clear roads and restore safe driving conditions as quickly as possible.

The North Carolina Department Of Transportation is working closely with the Highway Patrol and local law enforcement to identify and move abandoned vehicles that are blocking travel lanes or posing an immediate safety hazard. Under the current state of emergency and North Carolina's [Quick Clearance Law](#), trucks are moving cars to the shoulder where possible. In other cases, the Highway Patrol and local law enforcement are coordinating with towing companies to move vehicles to a safe location.

Drivers whose vehicles were abandoned within city limits need to call their local police department. If the vehicle was off the roadway and is not considered a safety hazard, it will not immediately be towed. Drivers who need to track down abandoned vehicles outside city limits should contact the Highway Patrol.