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## Crews of workers huddle, fine-tune strategy, suit up

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The region yesterday got ready for a big snowstorm and a big NFC championship game. The conjunction of the two, with the winter storm expected to start today and the Eagles-Falcons matchup tomorrow, produced a small flurry of sports cliches from public officials charged with dealing with the region's first big snow.

"As the Eagles are ready to bring home the National Football Conference championship to Philadelphia, PennDot is ready to use its fleet of snow equipment to keep state highways passable during the upcoming storm," said Andrew Warren, regional Pennsylvania Department of Transportation executive.

Philadelphia Managing Director Philip R. Goldsmith said the storm would be "our Super Bowl," with snow, freezing temperatures and high winds pitted against a team of "dedicated public servants." He predicted victory but urged people to stay off the roads, look out for their neighbors, and move their cars off snow emergency routes.

The New Jersey Department of Transportation, New Jersey Turnpike Authority, and South Jersey Transportation Authority together had more than 2,000 trucks available for salting and plowing. "The department's ready. The agencies are ready," said Marc La Vorgna, NJDot spokesman. PennDot's Warren said the agency has 415 trucks detailed to plow the five-county area's 3,500 miles of state highways and 74,428 tons of salt on hand in the region. To complement the PennDot fleet, 98 municipalities have signed on to clear 1,195 miles of state highway in the suburbs and city.

Dave Shaffer, director of public works in Lower Providence, Montgomery County, said he has a crew of 12, 10 plows, and 900 tons of salt to care for 82 1/2 miles of highway.

Dominic Vesper, deputy Camden County administrator for public services, said: "We're going to have all 80 personnel report to work at 8 a.m., get out to their vehicles, and go from there." Paul Wnek, Burlington County's supervisor of roads, said he has 54 dump trucks with plows scheduled to start this morning, along with 14 pickup trucks with containers of liquid calcium. The Gloucester County Department of PublicWorks officials said they had loaded 42 trucks with 2,000 tons of salt. The county has placed 38 drivers on standby, said Freeholder Robert Damming. Philadelphia's Goldsmith canceled today's trash collection. The city has mobilized its "snow team," he said, and it met yesterday as the city faces the challenge of dealing with a snowstorm and the Eagles championship game against the Atlanta Falcons, scheduled to begin at 3 p.m. tomorrow.

Don Smolenski, chief financial officer of the Eagles, said the team would have 400 to 750 workers coming in this morning and staying all night, if necessary, to clean the field, seats, and perimeter of the field. He expected as many as 1,000 workers today, and an additional crew of 200 tomorrow morning.

Shawn Jalosinski, executive director of the **Sports Complex Special Services District**, urged fans not to arrive at Lincoln Financial Field before 8 a.m. The snow removal may reduce some of the 23,000 parking spaces, and fans should not park in nearby residential areas or on snow emergency routes, he said.

He also said that no one should arrive for tomorrow's game today - apparently a few showed up yesterday.

Faye Moore, SEPTA's general manager, reminded people that it "never snows" in the Broad

Street subway, and urged fans to use public transportation to the game.

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Contributing to this article were Inquirer staff writers Frederick Cusick, Adam Fifield, Kristen Graham, Frank Kummer and Diane Mastrull. It also includes information from the Associated Press.

The Eagles are urging fans to use public transportation if possible and to arrive early for the NFC championship game against the Atlanta Falcons on Sunday. Kickoff is at 3 p.m. Outside gates to Headhouse Plaza will open at noon.

Five city-operated parking lots will offer \$5 parking on game day. SEPTA tokens can be purchased at the lots, which are a short walk to the Broad Street Line's City Hall Station.

AutoPark: JFK Plaza Garage, 15th and Arch Streets.

AutoPark: Center City lot, 15th and Arch Streets.

Gateway Garage: 15th and Vine Streets.

AutoPark: Gallery Mall, 10th and Filbert Streets.

AutoPark: Jefferson, 10th and Ludlow Streets.

For additional information, call SEPTA at 215-580-7800 or check the SEPTA Web site, <http://www.septa.org>.

Snow emergency routes

For a list of snow emergency routes, visit:

[http://www.phila.gov/streets/snow\\_emergency.html](http://www.phila.gov/streets/snow_emergency.html)

or call 215-686 SNOW.

Important phone numbers to call in cold weather

24-hour emergency outreach to assist homeless people: 215-232-1984

Licenses and Inspections' Heat Assistance Crisis Hotline: 215-686-2590

To donate hats, scarves, gloves, socks, coats or blankets to shelters: 215-686-7106

City Hall switchboard: 215-686-1776

Illustration:PHOTO

TOM GRALISH / Inquirer Staff Photographer

Workers load salt into trucks at the PennDot stockpile in Phila. An official said 74,428 tons of salt are on hand in the region.

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