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# Winter Preparedness

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# Winter Season Preparedness

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## Winter Weather Hazards

Winter storms bring extreme cold, sleet, snow, ice or a combination of all of these which can cause power outages for hours or even days.



# Winter Season Preparedness

## Vehicles

- Ensure vehicle fuel remains at or above  $\frac{1}{4}$  tank;
- Replace summer windshield washer fluid with winter rated type;
- Ensure vehicle is in good repair before departing;
- Consider keeping blankets, extra clothing, drinking water and non-perishable foods in vehicle;
- Check for weather conditions and updates prior to departure;
- Identify alternate routes to and from destinations.

## Work

- Discuss workplace winter plans with employer;
- Consider keeping blankets, extra clothing, drinking water and non-perishable foods in go-kit;
- Identify alternate travel routes to and from work and refuge locations.

## Residence

- Stock enough drinking water and non-perishable food to support each person for at least three (3) days;
- Discuss with your Doctor the ability to obtain overlap of medications;
- Ensure heaters are working properly;
- Replace/check batteries in smoke detectors;
- Obtain flashlights, batteries, and a battery powered radio;
- Never operate grills or grills inside;
- Coordinate with neighbors for mutual aid.

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## Safety First!

As more people turn to alternate heating sources during winter storms, two major hazards are often overlooked: **fires** and **carbon monoxide**. It's important to keep safety in mind!

Only use electric space heaters if they have automatic shut-off switches and non-glowing heating elements. Keep all heat sources at least **three feet** away from furniture and drapes.

Never use a generator, grill, camp stove, or other gasoline, propane, or charcoal-burning devices inside a home, garage, basement, crawlspace, or any partially enclosed area. Keep these devices **outside** and at least 20 feet from doors, windows, and vents.

Keep fire extinguishers on hand, and make sure everyone in your house knows how to use them. Make sure you have a smoke detector and a carbon monoxide detector—and make sure they are in working order!



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## Additional Cold Weather and Preparedness Tips can be found at:

American Red Cross: <https://www.redcross.org/get-help/how-to-prepare-for-emergencies/types-of-emergencies/winter-storm.html>

Arc In Spanish: <https://www.redcross.org/cruz-roja/obtener-ayuda/tipos-de-emergencias/tormentas-de-nieve.html>

BCHD: <https://health.baltimorecity.gov/emergency-preparedness-response/code-blue>

DOT: <https://snow.baltimorecity.gov/>

Children safety Tips:

<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/safety-prevention/at-play/Pages/Cold-Weather-Safety.aspx>

FEMA resources:

<https://www.ready.gov/winter-weather>

<https://orders.gpo.gov/icpd/ICPD.aspx> (Order Free Preparedness publications)

Pet Safety Tips:

<https://www.asPCA.org/pet-care/general-pet-care/cold-weather-safety-tips>

<https://www.humanesociety.org/resources/five-ways-protect-pets-winter>



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## BE PREPARED FOR A WINTER STORM

Winter storms create a higher risk of car accidents, hypothermia, frostbite, carbon monoxide poisoning, and heart attacks from overexertion.

**FEMA**  
FEMA V-101-4/June 2018

Winter storms and blizzards can bring extreme cold, freezing rain, snow, ice, and high winds.



## IF YOU ARE UNDER A WINTER STORM WARNING, FIND SHELTER RIGHT AWAY

Stay off roads.



Stay indoors and dress warmly.



Prepare for power outages.



Use generators outside only.



Listen for emergency information and alerts.



Look for signs of hypothermia and frostbite.



Check on neighbors.

## HOW TO STAY SAFE WHEN A WINTER STORM THREATENS



**Know your area's risk for winter storms.** Extreme winter weather can leave communities without utilities or other services for long periods of time.

**Prepare your home to keep out the cold with insulation, caulking, and weather stripping.** Learn how to keep pipes from freezing. Install and test smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors with battery backups.

**Pay attention to weather reports and warnings of freezing weather and winter storms.** Sign up for your community's warning system. The Emergency Alert System (EAS) and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Weather Radio also provide emergency alerts.

**Gather supplies in case you need to stay home for several days without power.** Keep in mind each person's specific needs, including medication. Do not forget the needs of pets. Have extra batteries for radios and flashlights.

**Create an emergency supply kit for your car.** Include jumper cables, sand, a flashlight, warm clothes, blankets, bottled water, and non-perishable snacks. Keep the gas tank full.

**Learn the signs of and basic treatments for frostbite and hypothermia.** For more information, visit: [www.cdc.gov/disasters/winter/staysafe/index.html](http://www.cdc.gov/disasters/winter/staysafe/index.html).



**Stay off roads if at all possible.** If trapped in your car, stay inside.

**Limit your time outside.** If you need to go outside, wear layers of warm clothing. Watch for signs of frostbite and hypothermia.

**Avoid carbon monoxide poisoning. Only use generators and grills outdoors and away from windows.** Never heat your home with a gas stove/oven.

**Reduce the risk of a heart attack. Avoid overexertion when shoveling snow.**

**Watch for signs of frostbite and hypothermia and begin treatment right away.**

**Check on neighbors.** Older adults and young children are more at risk in extreme cold.



**Frostbite** causes loss of feeling and color around the face, fingers, and toes.

- **Signs:** Numbness, white or grayish-yellow skin, and firm or waxy skin.

- **Actions:** Go to a warm room. Soak in warm water. Use body heat to warm. Do not massage or use a heating pad.

**Hypothermia** is an unusually low body temperature. A temperature below 95 degrees is an emergency.

- **Signs:** Shivering, exhaustion, confusion, fumbling hands, memory loss, slurred speech, and drowsiness.

- **Actions:** Go to a warm room. Warm the center of the body first—chest, neck, head, and groin. Keep dry and wrapped up in warm blankets, including the head and neck.

### Take an Active Role in Your Safety

Go to [Ready.gov](http://Ready.gov) and search for **winter storm**. Download the **FEMA app** to get more information about preparing for a **winter storm**.



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## HYPOTHERMIA

WHAT YOU KNOW COULD SAVE A LIFE

### Hypothermia Facts: Did you know?

- Hypothermia is a common cause of illness and death in urban areas
- People can die of hypothermia even when the temperature is above freezing, especially if it's wet or windy
- People who are hypothermic may be lethargic and confused – they can look like they're intoxicated, when really they're sick and need medical attention
- People who have the greatest risk of dying from hypothermia include:

- Homeless people
- Substance abusers
- People with psychiatric disorders
- Elderly people
- People with chronic medical conditions or malnutrition

### Recognize the Signs

- Lethargy and confusion
- Slurred speech
- Trouble walking normally
- Uncontrollable shivering – note that shivering STOPS as patients get colder, because the muscles tire out. People with the most severe hypothermia may not shiver

### What Can You Do?

- SUSPECT hypothermia in people who look like they're intoxicated, are confused, are having trouble walking or talking, or are shivering uncontrollably
- Help the person get warm again:

- Remove all wet clothing
- Cover the person with a warm dry blanket
- Give the person a hot beverage
- Allow them to remain indoors to warm up

- Call 911 and send the person to the hospital if:

- Initial symptoms are severe OR
- The person is not improving after 1-2 hours of rewarming OR
- If you use a thermometer, send all people with oral temperatures of 93 degrees or below to the hospital immediately

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## SNOW SHOVELING SAFETY TIPS

- Dress warmly and work slowly.
- Shovel early and often.
- Push the snow instead of lifting it.
- If you must lift the snow, lift with your legs.
- Never remove deep snow all at once; do it piecemeal. Shovel an inch or two, then take another inch off. Rest, and repeat if necessary.
- Pace yourself. Shoveling snow is an aerobic activity. Take frequent breaks and replenish fluids to prevent dehydration.
- Listen to your body. Stop if you feel pain or observe heart attack warning signs that may include chest pain as well as shoulder, neck or arm pain; dizziness, fainting, sweating or nausea; or shortness of breath. If you think you're having a heart attack, seek medical help immediately.

### Those most at risk for a heart attack include:

- Anyone who has already had a heart attack.
- Individuals with a history of heart disease.
- Those with high blood pressure or high cholesterol levels.
- Smokers.
- Individuals leading a sedentary lifestyle.

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