

Winter Storms & Extreme Cold Preparations



By taking a few simple steps you can be better prepared for winter storms and extreme cold conditions this winter. We hope this guide will assist you in making these preparations.

Household Emergency Supplies

Before winter approaches, add the following items to your **household emergency supplies**:

- Road salt or other environmentally safe products to melt ice on walkways.
- Sand to improve traction.
- Snow shovels and other snow removal equipment.
- Sufficient heating fuel. You may become isolated in your home and regular fuel sources may be cut off. Store a good supply of dry, seasoned wood for your fireplace or wood-burning stove.
- Adequate clothing and blankets to keep you warm.

Winterize Your Home

Remember to winterize your home by:

- Extend the life of your fuel supply by insulating walls and attics, caulking and weather-stripping doors and windows, and installing storm windows or covering windows with plastic.
- Clear rain gutters.
- Cut away tree branches that could fall on a house or other structure during a storm.
- Insulate water pipes. Allow faucets to drip a little during cold weather to avoid freezing. Running water, even at a trickle, can help prevent pipes from freezing.
- Maintain heating equipment and chimneys by having them cleaned and inspected every year.
- All fuel-burning equipment should be vented to the outside and kept clear to reduce the risk of carbon monoxide poisoning, fire, etc.
- Keep fire extinguishers on hand. Make sure everyone in your house knows how to use them. House fires pose an additional risk during winter, as more people turn to alternate heating sources without taking the necessary safety precautions.
- Learn how to shut off water valves in case a water pipe bursts.

- Check or have a contractor check the structural ability of the roof to sustain unusually heavy weight from the accumulation of snow - or water, if drains on flat roofs do not work. Repair roof leaks and loose or missing shingles.

Carbon Monoxide Poisoning Prevention

Be aware of the risks of **carbon monoxide poisoning**:

- Never use a generator, grill, camp stove or other gasoline, propane, natural gas or charcoal burning devices inside a home, garage, basement, crawlspace or any partially enclosed area. Locate unit outside away from doors, windows and vents that could allow carbon monoxide to come indoors.
- The primary hazards to avoid when using alternate sources for electricity, heating or cooking are carbon monoxide poisoning, electric shock and fire.
- Install carbon monoxide alarms in central locations on every level of your home and outside sleeping areas to provide early warning of accumulating carbon monoxide.
- If the carbon monoxide alarm sounds, move quickly to a fresh air location outdoors or by an open window or door.
- Call for help from the fresh air location and remain there until emergency personnel arrive to assist you.

Family Communication Plan

Make a **family communications plan**. Your family may not be together when a winter emergency occurs, so it is important to know how you will contact one another, how you will get back together and what you will do in case of an emergency.

Pets and Livestock Care

Bring **pets** inside during winter weather. Move other animals or **livestock** to sheltered areas with non-frozen drinking water.

Winter Road Travel and Vehicle Maintenance

If travel is necessary ensure winter road conditions are safe for driving. Keep a winter emergency supply kit in your vehicle. Winterize your vehicle and travel plans.

- Check or have a mechanic check the following items for your vehicle:
 - Antifreeze levels - ensure they are sufficient to avoid freezing.
 - Battery and ignition system - should be in top condition and battery terminals clean. Consider using a battery warmer/blanket.
 - Brakes - check for wear and fluid levels.
 - Exhaust system - check for leaks and crimped pipes and repair or replace as necessary. Carbon monoxide is deadly and usually gives no warning.
 - Fuel and air filters - replace and keep water out of the system by using additives and maintaining a full tank of gas. A full tank will keep the fuel line from freezing.
 - Heater and defroster - ensure they work properly.
 - Lights and flashing hazard lights - check for serviceability.
 - Oil - check for level and weight. Heavier oils congeal more at low temperatures and do not lubricate as well.

- Thermostat - ensure it works properly.
- Windshield wiper equipment - repair and replace as required and maintain an adequate washer fluid level.
- Install good winter tires - make sure the tires have adequate tread.

- Update the emergency kits in your vehicles with:
 - snow shovel
 - windshield scraper and small broom
 - flashlight
 - battery powered radio
 - extra batteries
 - water
 - snack food
 - matches
 - extra hats, socks, mittens, etc.
 - first aid kit with pocket knife
 - necessary medications
 - blanket(s)
 - tow chain or rope
 - road salt and sand
 - booster cables
 - emergency flares
 - fluorescent distress flag