



“Helping to maintain a healthy community”

WINTER STORMS & EXTREME COLD FACT SHEET

Before Winter Storms and Extreme Cold

Add the following supplies to your disaster supplies kit:

- ❖ Rock salt to melt ice on walkways
- ❖ Sand to improve traction
- ❖ Snow shovels and other snow removal equipment.

Prepare your home and family:

- ❖ Prepare for possible isolation in your home by having sufficient heating fuel. Plan an alternate heat source
- ❖ Winterize your home by insulating walls, weather-strip doors and windows, and installing storm windows or plastic
- ❖ Winterize your house, barn, shed that provides shelter for your family, neighbors, livestock or equipment
- ❖ Clear rain gutters, repair roof leaks and cut away tree branches that could fall on a house during a storm
- ❖ Insulate pipes with insulation or newspapers and plastic and allow faucets to drip a little during cold weather to avoid freezing
- ❖ Keep fire extinguishers on hand, and make sure everyone in your house knows how to use them
- ❖ Learn how to shut off water valves in case a water pipe bursts
- ❖ Know ahead of time what you should do to help elderly or disabled friends, neighbors or employees
- ❖ Have a professional check the structural ability of your roof to sustain accumulated snow or water for flat roofs

Prepare your car:

- ❖ Check your cars antifreeze levels, battery, brakes, heater and defroster, lights, thermostat and windshield wipers
- ❖ Install good winter tires with adequate tread.
- ❖ Maintain at least a half tank of gas during the winter season.
- ❖ Place a winter emergency kit in each car that includes a shovel, flashlight, battery powered radio, water, snack foods, blanket(s), first aid kit, booster cables, emergency flares and fluorescent distress flag

Dress for the Weather:

- ❖ Wear several layers of loose fitting, warm clothing. The outer garments should be tightly woven and water repellent
- ❖ Wear mittens, which are warmer than gloves.
- ❖ Wear a hat.
- ❖ Cover your mouth with a scarf to protect your lungs.

During a Winter Storm

Indoor guidelines

- ❖ Listen to your radio, television, or weather radio for reports and emergency information
- ❖ Eat regularly and drink ample fluids, but avoid caffeine and alcohol
- ❖ Conserve fuel by keeping your residence cooler than normal and closing off heat to unused rooms
- ❖ If the pipes freeze, remove insulation, open all faucets, and pour hot water over the pipes closest to the cold
- ❖ Maintain ventilation when using indoor heaters to avoid build-up of toxic fumes and refuel kerosene heaters outdoors

If you are outdoors

- ❖ Avoid overexertion when shoveling snow. Overexertion can bring on a heart attack—a major cause of death in the winter
- ❖ Cover your mouth to protect your lungs from extremely cold air
- ❖ Keep dry and change wet clothing to prevent a loss of body heat. Wet clothing loses its insulating value
- ❖ Watch for signs of frostbite, including loss of feeling and white or pale appearance in extremities such as fingers, toes, ear lobes, and the tip of the nose. If symptoms are detected, get medical help immediately
- ❖ Watch for signs of hypothermia, including uncontrollable shivering, memory loss, disorientation, incoherence, slurred speech, drowsiness, and apparent exhaustion. If symptoms of hypothermia are detected:
 - get the victim to a warm location, remove wet clothing, and wrap their entire body in a blanket
 - warm the body from the center first and use warm, non-alcoholic or non-caffeinated beverages
 - get medical help as soon as possible

If you are driving

- ❖ Drive only if it is necessary. If you must drive, consider the following:
 - Travel in the day, don't travel alone, and let others know your travel plans and schedule
 - Stay on main roads avoiding back road shortcuts
- ❖ If a blizzard traps you in the car:
 - Pull off the highway, turn on hazard lights and hang a distress flag from the radio antenna or window
 - Remain in your vehicle where rescuers are most likely to find you - distances are distorted by blowing snow
 - Run the engine and heater about 10 minutes per hour ventilate to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning
 - Exercise to maintain body heat, use seat covers and floor mats for insulation, huddle with other passengers
 - Take turns sleeping - one person should look for rescue crews
 - Drink fluids to avoid dehydration