

Winter Weather Preparedness

With winter right around the corner it is important to be prepared!

Watches and Warnings

Winter Storm Watch

Issued when there is a potential for heavy snow or significant ice accumulations, usually at least 24 to 36 hours in advance. The criteria for this watch can vary from place to place.

Winter Storm Warning

Issued when a winter storm is producing or is forecast to produce heavy snow or significant ice accumulations. The criteria for this warning can vary from place to place.

Blizzard Warning

Issued for winter storms with sustained or frequent winds of 35 mph or higher with considerable falling and/or blowing snow that frequently reduces visibility to 1/4 of a mile or less. These conditions are expected to prevail for a minimum of 3 hours.

Winter Storms Home Preparedness Checklist

- Before winter begins, add the following supplies to your emergency kit:
 - Rock salt or other products to melt ice on walkways
 - Snow shovels and other snow removal equipment
 - Sufficient heating fuel (Oil, Wood, Etc..)
 - Adequate clothing and blankets to keep you warm
- Make a family emergency plan — 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.
- Listen to news channels for critical information from the National Weather Service (NWS) and be alert to changing weather conditions
- Minimize travel, but keep a disaster supplies kit in your vehicle

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

During the Winter Storm

- Stay indoors during the storm
- Walk carefully on snowy, icy walkways
- Avoid overexertion when shoveling snow; overexertion can bring on a heart attack — a major cause of death in the winter
- If you must shovel snow, stretch before going outside
- Keep dry and change wet clothing frequently to prevent a loss of body heat
- Watch for signs of frostbite: 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: 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, warm the center of the body first and give warm, non-alcoholic beverages if the victim is conscious. Get medical help as soon as possible
- Drive only if it is absolutely necessary. If you must drive: travel in the day, don't travel alone, stay on main roads and avoid back road shortcuts
- Let someone know your destination, your route and when you expect to arrive.
- If the pipes freeze, remove any insulation or layers of newspapers and wrap pipes in rags. Completely open all faucets and pour hot water over the pipes, starting where they were most exposed to the cold (or where the cold was most likely to penetrate)
- Conserve fuel, if necessary, by keeping your residence cooler than normal. Temporarily close off heat to some rooms
- If you will be going away during cold weather, leave the heat on in your home, set to a temperature no lower than 55°F