

Winter Preparedness

Winter weather such as Nor'easters, blizzards and winter storms can become very dangerous in a short period of time. The combination of heavy snow, gusty winds, extreme cold temperatures and ice can cause living and traveling conditions to become unbearable and dangerous.

Before a Storm

- † Listen to your local media stations and keep alert for any emergency announcements or storm updates.
- † Prepare a family disaster plan and an emergency supplies kit. (see "Emergency Supply Kits" section)
- † Make sure there is a plan to stay with a family member or friend if shelter is needed due to utility failure in your home or until such fixes are made.
- † Know where your utilities shut off switches are located and that you have the proper equipment readily available.
- † Place emergency numbers by your home for all utility providers and include a list of important phone numbers of plumbers, heating service providers, snow removal contractors, landlord, etc., in the event heating units or pipes break down or burst.
- † If renting a property, make sure that your landlord has adequately maintained your heating unit, water pipes, etc. Obtain permission from your landlord in writing prior to any storm stating that the landlord will fix any damaged heating unit or water pipe as soon as possible or that the landlord gives you permission to do so.
- † Plan to stay home and off the roads until the storm passes.
- † Make sure your vehicle is properly conditioned for the weather. Keep at least $\frac{3}{4}$ of a tank of gas in your vehicle at all times.

During a Storm

- † Keep tuned to your local media for weather and emergency updates.
- † Stay home and travel only if absolutely necessary.
- † If your home's heating unit fails, shut the doors to all rooms that are not in use to assist you in minimizing the loss of heat and contact a service provider for assistance.
- † For your safety use flashlights, not candles.

After a Storm

- † Dress in loose and layered clothing; keep your mouth, hands and head covered at all times to keep you warm and allow for proper ventilation.
- † When shoveling or removing snow, do not shovel snow into any streets as this may obstruct emergency vehicle access and cause a safety concern for motorists.
- † Do not overexert, take breaks in between.
- † Allow for the plows to adequately clear roads before traveling.

ADDITIONAL PREPAREDNESS INFORMATION

Winter Weather Definitions

- † **Winter Storm Watch:** Snow and/or ice accumulations are possible in the next 36 hours.
- † **Winter Storm Warning:** A severe winter storm with accumulating snow, sleet, freezing rain is expected within a 24-hour period.
- † **Blizzard Warning:** Strong winds, driven snow and extreme wind chills are likely in the next several hours.
- † **Winter Weather Advisory:** Minimal snowfall, sleet and freezing rain are expected.
- † **Freezing Rain/Ice Advisory:** Accumulation of minor ice due to freezing rain can be expected.
- † **Nor'easter:** A strong coastal storm, which rides up the eastern seaboard causing heavy rain and snow, strong winds and coastal flooding. Most common during fall and winter.

School and Children Preparedness

- † Prior to the arrival of a storm, make sure plans are in place in the event school is cancelled or delayed.
- † Include plans for who will pick your child up from school, whether it is all right to bring your child into work if school is cancelled or dismissed early, and whether there is a relative or friend that can assist you with these plans.
- † If a child needs to wait at a bus stop, make sure they are warmly dressed. Make plans that will allow them to sit in a warm car or house until the bus arrives.
- † Explain to your child that they should not throw snowballs at other children or vehicles and that they should not play on snow covered roads or in snowdrifts where plow drivers may not see them.

Senior Citizen Preparedness

- † Check on elderly neighbors or relatives before, during and after the storm to make sure everything is all right and assistance is not needed.
- † Make sure there is a back-up supply of medication, health aided devices, etc. prior to any storm.
- † Make sure all pertinent medical information is kept secure, i.e., doctor's or nurse's telephone numbers including emergency telephone numbers, list of medication and ailments, etc.
- † If health aided equipment is utilized such as a ventilator, etc; make sure that a back-up power supply is purchased or plans are in place to evacuate the individual to a safe location such as a hospital or family or friend's home in the event of electrical failure prior to any storm.

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- † See “Seniors and People with Special Needs” section for additional information.

Utility Preparedness

- † Be sure your heating units are in good working condition and have working emergency shut offs in case of emergency.
- † Make sure your water pipes are properly maintained and insulated.
- † Make sure there is proper ventilation when using heating appliances.
- † Keep all heating fuel in approved containers and in well-ventilated storage areas, outside the house.
- † Do not use your stove as a heating source.
- † When using your fireplace or wood stove, keep a glass or metal screen in front of the opening to prevent embers or sparks from jumping out, items getting in, or occupants getting burned.
- † Never go to sleep unless you are certain that your fireplace or wood stove fire is out and do not close your damper with hot ashes in the fireplace as this may force toxic carbon monoxide into the house.

Vehicle and Travel Preparedness

- † Drive slowly and carefully with your lights on and leave enough time to reach your destination.
- † When driving up and down hills proceed with caution to prevent sliding. Avoid hills if at all possible.
- † Beware of black ice, fallen tree limbs or downed wires.
- † Check to make sure your wipers, tires, and other vehicle parts are in good working condition.
- † Do not venture down flooded streets.
- † Clear the top of your vehicle of snow and ice so it does not become a hazard for other drivers.
- † Leave enough space between you and other drivers- do not tailgate or follow too closely not only for your safety but also for the safety of other drivers.
- † When exiting or changing lanes, use extreme caution and be sure to use blinker signals.