

Winter Storm

Preparedness Checklist

Winter storms can bring extreme cold, freezing rain, sleet, heavy snowfall, ice, and high winds. These storms can cause transportation, heat, power, and communication disruptions. They also can close schools, stores, and workplaces. Winters are getting warmer and shorter because of climate change. But, because a warmer atmosphere holds more moisture, heavier snowfalls are more likely to occur. We can take action to prepare. Prepare now to protect yourself, your loved ones, and your home.



What to Do: Before



Plan to Stay Warm

- Stay warm indoors to prevent frostbite and hypothermia.
- Before the winter season begins, make sure you can heat your home safely. Prepare your home to keep out the cold with insulation, caulking, and weather stripping.
- Consider using an indoor thermometer or thermostat to monitor the temperature inside.
- Plan to check on loved ones and neighbors to make sure they are staying warm. This is especially important for older adults and babies.
- Drink plenty of warm fluids but avoid caffeine and alcohol.
- Avoid travel if you can.
- If you must go outside, plan to dress properly. Keep your nose, ears, cheeks, chin, fingers, and toes covered in warm, dry clothing. These areas are the first to be at risk for frostbite.
 - Wear layers of loose clothing, a coat, hat, mittens, and water-resistant boots. Use a scarf to cover your face and mouth.
- Know where you will go if your home becomes too cold. You could go to a friend's house, a public library, or a warming center.



Learn Emergency Skills

- Learn first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). Emergency services may be delayed.
- Learn how to spot and treat frostbite and hypothermia.
- Install and test smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors with battery back-ups.
- Be ready to live without power, gas, and water.
- Learn how to keep pipes from freezing.



Plan to Stay Connected

- Sign up for free emergency alerts from your local government.
- Plan to monitor local weather and news.
- Have a backup battery or a way to charge your cell phone.
- Have a battery-powered radio to use during a power outage.
- Understand the alerts you may receive.
 - A WATCH means **Be Prepared!**
 - A WARNING means **Take Action!**
- Create a support team to help everyone stay safe in a disaster. Plan how you can help each other.



Gather Emergency Supplies

- Gather food, water, and medicine before a winter storm. Stores might be closed, and it may be unsafe to travel.
- Organize supplies into a Go-Kit and a Stay-at-Home Kit.
 - Go-Kit: at least three days of supplies you can carry with you if you need to go somewhere else to stay warm. Include critical backup batteries and chargers for your devices (cell phone, CPAP, wheelchair, etc.)
 - Stay-at-Home Kit: at least two weeks of supplies.
- Ensure you have enough warm clothing, such as hats, mittens, and blankets, for everyone in your household.
- You may lose access to drinking water. Set aside at least one gallon of drinking water per person per day.
- Consider having emergency supplies in your vehicle, such as a blanket, warm clothing, a first aid kit, and boots.
- Have a 1-month supply of needed medications and medical supplies. Consider keeping a list of your medications and dosages on a small card to carry with you.
- Keep personal, financial, and medical records safe and easy to access (hard copies or securely backed up).
- Have a snow shovel and ice-melting products to keep your walkways safe.

What to Do: During



Stay Safe

- Use care with space heaters and fireplaces to prevent fires. Keep anything that could catch fire **at least 3 feet (1 meter) from the heat!**
- Avoid using candles because of the fire risk. Use battery-powered lights and flashlights instead.
- Prevent carbon monoxide poisoning. Carbon monoxide poisoning is common during power outages when people use other means to heat and cook. You can prevent carbon monoxide poisoning.
 - Only use generators, grills, and camp stoves outdoors and away from windows.
 - Carbon monoxide kills. If you start to feel sick, dizzy, or weak, **get to fresh air right away – do not delay.**
- To prevent carbon monoxide poisoning and home fires, never heat your home with a cooking oven or stove.



Act Fast if You See Signs of Frostbite or Hypothermia

- **Frostbite** is when a part of your body freezes. Your nose, ears, cheeks, chin, fingers, and toes often are the first affected. People may experience pain, numbness, and a change of skin color.
 - What to do for frostbite: Move to a warm place. Warm the affected area gently by soaking in warm water (NOT hot) until the skin appears normal and feels warm. Seek emergency medical care.
- **Hypothermia** can kill you. It occurs when your body loses heat faster than it can produce heat. This causes a dangerously low body temperature. Older adults, babies, children, and people with certain health conditions are more at risk.
 - Shivering is one of the first signs of hypothermia; other signs include confusion, drowsiness, and slurred speech.
 - What to do for hypothermia: Seek emergency medical care right away. Move to a warm place. Remove any wet clothing and warm the body slowly.

What to Do: After



Stay Safe

- If you need to go outside, use extreme caution when driving or walking on ice.
- Avoid damaged or fallen power lines. They can electrocute you.
- Be aware of branches, trees, and ice that may fall.
- Avoid overexertion when shoveling snow. Take frequent breaks and, if possible, work with a partner.
- Use ice-melting products to keep your walkways safe.
- Go to a public library, shopping mall, or warming center if your home becomes too cold.



Take Care of Yourself

- It's normal to have a lot of bad feelings, stress, or anxiety.
- Eat healthy food and get enough sleep to help you deal with stress.
- You can contact the Disaster Distress Helpline for free if you need to talk to someone. Call or text **1-800-985-5990**.

Prepare so you can protect. | For more information, visit redcross.org/prepare | Download the Emergency App

