



Winter Storms

Did you know that if you plan to be away during cold weather, you should leave the heat on in your home set to a temperature no lower than 55° F?

Winter storms can range from a moderate snow over a few hours to a blizzard with blinding, wind-driven snow that lasts for several days. Many winter storms are accompanied by dangerously low temperatures and sometimes by strong winds, icing, sleet and freezing rain. Regardless of the severity of a winter storm, you should be prepared in order to remain safe during these events. Know the difference between an advisory, watch and warning on p. 4.

Before

- Make a plan (see p. 5) and build a kit (see p. 6).
 - Winterize your vehicle and keep the gas tank full. A full tank will keep the fuel line from freezing.
 - Insulate your home by installing storm windows or covering windows with plastic from the inside to keep cold air out.
 - Maintain heating equipment and chimneys by having them cleaned and inspected every year.
 - 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.
 - Add sand, rock salt or non-clumping kitty litter to your disaster kit to make walkways and steps less slippery.
 - Have warm coats, gloves or mittens, hats, boots and extra blankets, and warm clothing accessible for all household members.
- Keep garage doors closed if there are water supply lines in the garage.
 - Open kitchen and bathroom cabinet doors to allow warmer air to circulate around the plumbing. Be sure to move any harmful cleaners and household chemicals out of the reach of children.
 - Keep the thermostat set to the same temperature both during the day and at night. By temporarily suspending the use of lower nighttime temperatures, you may incur a higher heating bill, but you can prevent a much more costly repair job if pipes freeze and burst.
 - Go to a designated public shelter if your home loses power or heat during periods of extreme cold.
 - Avoid driving when conditions include sleet, freezing rain or drizzle, snow or dense fog. If travel is necessary, keep a disaster supplies kit in your vehicle.

During

- Listen to a NOAA weather radio or other local news channels for critical information from the National Weather Service (NWS) on snow storms and blizzards.
 - Bring pets/companion animals inside during winter weather. Move other animals or livestock to sheltered areas and make sure that their access to food and water is not blocked by snow drifts, ice or other obstacles.
 - Running water, even at a trickle, helps prevent pipes from freezing.
 - All fuel-burning equipment should be vented to the outside and kept clear.
- Before tackling strenuous tasks in cold temperatures, consider your physical condition, the weather factors and the nature of the task.
 - Protect yourself from frostbite and hypothermia by wearing warm, loose-fitting, lightweight clothing in several layers. Stay indoors, if possible.
 - Help people who require special assistance such as elderly people living alone, people with disabilities and children.

After

- Let friends and family know you're safe.
- Make sure to replenish disaster supplies if used during the storm.