

Safety Tips for Winter Storms

Winter storms in the form of freezing rain or sleet, ice, heavy snow or blizzards can be a serious hazard to people in many parts of the country. The first line of protection is to **BE AWARE OF WEATHER CONDITIONS** in your area.

By observing storm warnings, adequate preparation can be made to lessen the impact of hazardous weather conditions. To take full advantage of weather forecasts, learn and understand terms commonly used.



FREEZING RAIN AND FREEZING DRIZZLE indicates rain that freezes as it strikes the ground and other surfaces forming a coating of ice.

SLEET indicates small-particles of ice, usually mixed with rain. If enough sleet accumulates on the ground it will make travel hazardous.

SNOW, when used without a qualifying word, such as occasional or intermittent, indicates that a fall of snow is of a steady nature and will probably continue for several hours without let-up.

SNOW FLURRIES indicates periods of snow falling for short duration at intermittent periods. Accumulations are generally small.

WINTER STORM WATCH indicates severe winter weather conditions may affect your area (freezing rain, sleet, or heavy snow may occur either separately or in combination thereof).

WINTER STORM WARNING indicates that severe winter weather conditions are imminent.

HIGH WIND WATCH indicates sustained winds of at least 40 miles per hour, or gusts of at least 50 miles per hour or greater, are expected to last for at least one hour. (In some areas this means strong gusty winds occurring in shorter time periods.)

HEAVY SNOW WARNING indicates snowfalls of at least 4 inches in twenty-four hours are expected. (Heavy snow can mean lesser amounts where winter storms are infrequent.)

BLIZZARD WARNINGS are issued when sustained wind speeds of at least 35 miles per hour are accompanied by considerable falling and/or blowing snow. Visibility is dangerously restricted.

TRAVELERS' ADVISORIES are issued to indicate that falling, blowing, or drifting snow, freezing rain or drizzle, sleet, or strong winds may make driving difficult.

WIND CHILL is the effect of wind, in combination with actual temperature, which increases the rate of heat loss to the human body.

INDOORS:

A winter storm could isolate you in your home for several days, Be prepared to be without electricity and

conventional forms of heating and cooking.

- Keep an adequate supply of heating fuel on hand and use it sparingly. Your regular supplies may be curtailed by storm conditions. If necessary, conserve fuel by keeping the house cooler than usual, or by "closing off" some rooms temporarily. Since most furnaces are controlled by electric thermostats, have available some kind of emergency heating equipment and fuel so you can keep at least one room of your house warm enough to be livable, should you experience a power failure. Common examples of emergency heating equipment are camp stoves, kerosene heaters, or a supply of wood if you have a fireplace.
- Wear a sweater or coat indoors.
- Have on hand a good supply of blankets.
- Keep on hand flashlights with fresh batteries, or supply of candles or lanterns to provide light in power-failure situations.
- Keep an emergency supply of food on hand. Included should be food that does not require refrigeration or cooking. Also stock an emergency supply of water.
- Keep on hand the simple tools and equipment needed to fight a fire, should the help of your local fire department not be available.
- Keep a battery-powered radio in working order by making sure batteries (and extra batteries) are fresh so that you can listen to weather forecasts, information, and other emergency broadcasts by local authorities.

TRAVEL:

Avoid all trips. If you must travel, use public transportation if possible. However, if you are forced to use your automobile for a trip of any distance, take these precautions:

- Make sure your car is in good condition, properly serviced, and equipped with chains or snow tires.
- Maintain a full tank of gas, if at all possible.
- Have emergency winter storm supplies in the car, such as a container with booster cables, tow-line or rope, and a flashlight. It is also good to have with you a warm blanket, heavy gloves or mittens, overshoes, extra woolen socks, and winter headgear to cover your head and face.
- Take another person with you if possible. (If you must travel alone, make sure someone knows the route you will be taking.)
- Travel by daylight and use major highways if you can. Keep the car radio turned on for weather information and other emergency advice.
- Drive with all possible caution. Don't try to save time by traveling faster than road and weather conditions permit.
- **Don't be daring or foolhardy.** When storm conditions worsen rapidly, seek refuge immediately.

CAR TROUBLE:

KEEP CALM IF YOU GET IN TROUBLE:

If your car breaks down during a storm, or if you become stalled or lost, don't panic. Think the problem through, decide what is the safest and best thing to do, and then do it slowly and carefully. Call for assistance from a mobile phone. If a storm traps you on the road, pull off the highway, stay calm and remain in your car, where rescuers are most likely to find you. Set your directional lights to flashing, raise the hood of your car, or hang a cloth from the radio aerial or a car window. Then stay in your car and wait for help to arrive. Don't try to walk through a blizzard to safety. Getting lost can mean almost certain death.

- Don't waste gas by running the heater continuously. Beware of the danger of carbon monoxide poisoning. Open a window for ventilation and periodically clear away snow from the exhaust pipe.
- Stay alert. Exercise to maintain body heat. Move arms and legs vigorously and move around within the car. Never let everyone in the car sleep at one time. At night turn the dome light on so work crews may spot you.