



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.



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.



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.

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



Cold Weather Precautions

Keeping everyone safe as the weather changes

Before you find yourself unprepared for winter weather, consider these tips to promote safety and good health.

IN YOUR HOME

Create these smart precautions for a winter-ready home.

- Install a door sweep under your front door to keep the draft to a minimum.
- Don't use your oven for heat! Ovens can harm from carbon monoxide poisoning and accidental burns and fires.
- Install carbon monoxide monitors, especially near bedrooms. Home improvement stores carry affordable models.
- If you are using a space heater, make sure it works properly and does not have frayed wires. Never run it while you are asleep or away from home.
- Keep flammable items at least three feet away from heating sources (such as space heaters, the fireplace, or furnace).

IN YOUR CAR

Create an emergency kit in case of a breakdown or weather-related stall.

- Invest in a basic first aid and emergency car kit. You can purchase one ready-made or stock your own with first aid supplies, handwarmers, flares, flashlight, blankets, water, and snacks.
- Since proper tire pressure is paramount in winter driving, know the proper pressure for your tires, keep a simple tool to check pressure in your glove box, and know where to go for air when you need it.
- Keep a minimum of a half tank of gas in your car during the cold months to prevent the fuel line from freezing.



ILLUSTRATION BY TERRI SCOTT

IN YOUR HABITS

With colder weather and shorter days, follow these tips to stay active and healthy through the winter months.

- Be sure to get your flu shot!
- Emphasize handwashing among friends and family to fight germs that seem to be everywhere in the winter.
- Plan your exercise routine a week in advance. Having a plan helps you follow through!
- If the weather is too bad to visit your gym, be creative with indoor workouts: play with a Wii Fit, practice yoga with a free online video, or call up a friend and go on a "virtual walk" while making laps around your homes.

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Download at <http://chreader.org/cold-weather-precautions/>

Safe Snow Shoveling

“God’s voice thunders in marvelous ways; he does great things beyond our understanding. He says to the snow, ‘Fall on the earth,’ ... So that all men he has made may know his work...” Job 37:5-7

It is a fact of life in cold climates—snow falls and it must be cleared. Shoveling snow can be good exercise when done correctly, but safety must always be the first consideration. The greatest dangers are a heart attack or back injury. Both are serious and can have life long consequences. The upside of snow shoveling is that it is classified as moderate physical activity—something we all need to experience for 30 minutes each day. Other examples of moderate physical activity include brisk walking and social dancing.

Shoveling snow is much like lifting weights, and the cold air adds an extra strain on the body. Those people at the greatest risk for a back injury or a heart attack include people who:

- Have a history of heart attack or heart disease
- Have high blood pressure or high cholesterol
- Smoke
- Have inactive lifestyles
- Currently have a “bad back”

Anyone in these categories may want to hire the work done, or at the very least proceed very cautiously.

There are many ways to ensure that snow removal is good, safe exercise with just a few precautions and a little preparation. Warm your muscles up first, since warm muscles are less likely to be strained. It would be wise to march in place (or to the mailbox), roll your shoulders, swing your arms, and flex your knees before picking up a snow shovel. Dress in layers and wear slip resistant boots. Use a shovel with a S-shaped handle—it is designed to reduce strain on the spine. Consider using a snow blower to reduce the exertion required to clear the driveway or sidewalk. Try to shovel when the snow is still light and powdery whenever possible.

Hold the shovel close to the body and push the snow instead of lifting it, if at all possible. When you must lift, bend your knees and use your legs to lift while keeping your back straight. Avoid throwing the snow; instead carry it to the pile. A good strategy for deep snow is to shovel the top couple inches, take a break, and then tackle the next two inches. Consider using a smaller shovel, which forces you to scoop lighter loads. When buying a shovel, remember that a plastic shovel will be lighter than a metal one. Drink a glass of water before you start, and during your breaks—dehydration is an issue in the winter months, too. When you grip the shovel, make sure your hands are at least 12 inches apart, with one hand close to the base of the shovel. Consider spraying the shovel with a lubricant or silicon spray so the snow slides off easily.

STOP anytime you feel any pain, anywhere. If you are overheated, short of breath, or are sweating heavily, it's time to rest. If you cannot say a long sentence in one breath, you need to stop what you are doing until you recover. Most importantly, **listen** to your body. This is one instance when "toughing it out" may cause a serious injury, or even death. So be sensible, and be safe, and what the heck, make a snow angel!

For more information:

www.homemadesimple.com (select your language preference, then search snow shoveling)

www.healthcentral.com (search snow shoveling)

Prayer of St. Francis of Assisi (Prayer for Peace)

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace:
where there is hatred, let me sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
where there is sadness, joy.

O divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek
to be consoled as to console,
to be understood as to understand,
to be loved as to love.

For it is in giving that we receive,
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

From the Website The Cathedral of St. Thomas More

[Prayer of St. Francis of Assisi \(Prayer for Peace\) - Cathedral of St. Thomas More \(cathedralstm.org\)](http://cathedralstm.org)