

# Be Red Cross Ready

## Winter Storm Safety Checklist

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. Some winter storms are large enough to affect several states, while others affect only a single community. Many winter storms are accompanied by dangerously low temperatures and sometimes by strong winds, icing, sleet and freezing rain.

### Know the Difference

#### Winter Storm Outlook

Winter storm conditions are possible in the next 2 to 5 days.

#### Winter Weather Advisory

Winter weather conditions are expected to cause significant inconveniences and may be hazardous. When caution is used, these situations should not be life threatening.

#### Winter Storm Watch

Winter storm conditions are possible within the next 36 to 48 hours. People in a watch area should review their winter storm plans and stay informed about weather conditions.

#### Winter Storm Warning

Life-threatening, severe winter conditions have begun or will begin within 24 hours. People in a warning area should take precautions immediately.

### What should I do?



- Dress in several layers of lightweight clothing, wear mittens and a hat (preferably one that covers your ears).
- Wear waterproof, insulated boots to keep your feet warm and dry and to maintain your footing in ice and snow.
- Minimize travel. If travel is necessary, keep a disaster supplies kit in your vehicle.
- Listen to a NOAA Weather Radio or other local news channels for critical information from the National Weather Service (NWS).
- 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.
- Bring pets/companion animals inside during winter weather. Move other animals or livestock to sheltered areas with non-frozen drinking water.
- Running water, even at a trickle, helps prevent pipes from freezing.
- All fuel-burning equipment should be vented to the outside and kept clear.

### Cold-Related Emergencies

- Frostbite** and **hypothermia** are two dangerous and potentially life-threatening emergencies. Learn how to care for these emergencies by taking a first aid class.

### What supplies do I need?



- Water—at least a 3-day supply; one gallon per person per day
- Food—at least a 3-day supply of non-perishable, easy-to-prepare food
- Flashlight
- Battery-powered or hand-crank radio (NOAA Weather Radio, if possible)
- Extra batteries
- First aid kit
- Medications (7-day supply) and medical items (hearing aids with extra batteries, glasses, contact lenses, syringes, cane)
- Multi-purpose tool
- Sanitation and personal hygiene items
- Copies of personal documents (medication list and pertinent medical information, proof of address, deed/lease to home, passports, birth certificates, insurance policies)
- Cell phone with chargers
- Family and emergency contact information
- Extra cash
- Baby supplies (bottles, formula, baby food, diapers)
- Pet supplies (collar, leash, ID, food, carrier, bowl)
- Tools/supplies for securing your home
- Sand, rock salt or non-clumping kitty litter to make walkways and steps less slippery
- Warm coats, gloves or mittens, hats, boots and extra blankets and warm clothing for all household members
- Ample alternate heating methods such as fireplaces or wood- or coal-burning stoves

### What do I do after a storm?



- 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.
- 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.
- Check on your animals and make sure that their access to food and water is not blocked by snow drifts, ice or other obstacles. If possible, bring them indoors.

### Caution: Carbon Monoxide Kills

- Never use a generator, grill, camp stove or other gasoline, propane, natural gas or charcoal-burning devices inside a home, garage, basement, crawlspace or any partially enclosed area. Locate unit away from doors, windows and vents that could allow carbon monoxide to come indoors.
- The primary hazards to avoid when using alternate sources for electricity, heating or cooking are carbon monoxide poisoning, electric shock and fire.
- Install carbon monoxide alarms in central locations on every level of your home and outside sleeping areas to provide early warning of accumulating carbon monoxide.
- If the carbon monoxide alarm sounds, move quickly to a fresh air location outdoors or by an open window or door.
- Call for help from the fresh air location and remain there until emergency personnel arrive to assist you.

### Let Your Family Know You're Safe

If your community experiences a severe winter storm, or any disaster, register on the American Red Cross Safe and Well Web site available through [RedCross.org](http://RedCross.org) to let your family and friends know about your welfare. If you don't have Internet access, call **1-866-GET-INFO** to register yourself and your family.