

Winter Storm Advisory, Watch, and Warning

Winter Storm Advisory;

Winter weather is expected. Use caution. Light amounts of precipitation or patchy blowing snow will cause slick conditions and could affect travel if precautions are not taken. Winter weather advisories bring at least two or more of the following drizzle (or freezing rain), sleet and/or blowing snow.

Winter Storm Watch;

Snow, Sleet, or ice is possible within the next 12 to 36 hours. Be prepared for changing conditions. A possible storm could produce heavy snow, sleet, or freezing rain and have significant impact on the community.

Winter Storm Warning;

Snow, sleet, or ice is imminent. The storm means two or more of the following conditions may soon occur: heavy snow, freezing conditions may soon occur: heavy snow, freezing rain, sleet, and/or heavy winds. There will be a significant impact on the community. A blizzard is a severe snowstorm with winds in excess of 35 mph and visibility of less than a ¼ mile for more than 3 hours.

Winter storm facts;

- The air doesn't have to be super moist to produce impressive amounts of snow. Unlike rainfall, a blanket of fluffy snow contains lots of air that adds to its bulk. An inch of rain in the summer equals about 10 inches of snow in the colder months.
- Winter storms create a higher risk of car accidents, Hypothermia, frostbite, carbon monoxide poisoning, and heart attacks from overexertion.
- More than 22 million tons of salt are used on U.S. roads each winter. This amounts to more than 137 pounds of salt per person.
- Snow on the moist side is best for building you own backyard Frosty. Oneida scientist pegs the perfect snow to water ratio at 5:1.

WINTER STORM SURVIVAL GUIDE

Winter storms can range from normal snow of over a few hours to a blizzard with blinding, wind driven snow that lasts for several days.

Many winter storms bring dangerously lower temperatures and, sometimes strong winds, icing sleet and freezing rain.

Preparedness

Preparing for winter storms

Follow these tips as the storm threat approaches;

Sign up for your community's warning system. A weather radio also provides emergency alerts.

Pay attention to weather reports and warnings of freezing weather and winter storms.

Extreme winter weather can leave communities without utilities or other services for long periods of time.

Personal and Property safety;

Prepare you home with insulation, caulking, and weather stripping.

Heating systems should also be cleaned and serviced each year before they are used to ensure they are safe and working properly.

Install and check smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors.

Gather supplies in case you get stuck on the road. Bring blankets, or sleeping bags, extra clothing, snacks, bottled water, flashlight, jumper cables and small tool kit. Bring extra medication and a first aid kit.

Keep your car in good condition to decrease the chance of being stranded. Keep your car's gas tank full and to keep the fuel line from freezing.

Keep your cell phone battery fully charged and keep it with you whenever traveling. Have extra batteries and charging devices for phones and other critical equipment.

Keep a windshield scrapper, small broom, and shovel in your car for ice and snow removal.

Pet Safety:

Assemble an emergency kit for your pets to include; food, water, toys, medications, ID tags, leash, bedding, and plastic bags.

Never leave your pet outside during a snowstorm.

Response

A Winter Storm is Coming: Now What?

Follow these tips as the storm approaches:

Listen to the NOAA weather radio or local alerting system for current emergency information and instructions.

Contact your local emergency management office for information on designated public shelters in case you lose power or heat.

Stay off roads if possible. If going out on roads let someone know your destination, your route, and when you expect to arrive.

Check on neighbors especially the elderly and disabled.

Securing the property:

When using alternative heat from a fireplace, wood stove, or space heater, use the safeguards and ventilate property.

To keep pipes from freezing, let faucets drip a little and know how to shut off water valves.

Keep a shovel inside the house so you can maintain clearance around exit routes during the storm.

Personal Safety:

Limit your time outside. If you need to go outside, wear layers of warm clothing. Watch for signs of frostbite and hyperthermia.

Pet Safety:

Have a water supply available. Most animal deaths in winter storms are from dehydration.

Consider placing coats or boots on smaller dogs to wear during walks to protect them from the elements and cold temperatures.

Like people, cats and dogs are susceptible to frostbite and hyperthermia.

Recovery

After a Winter Storm

To prevent injuries and possible death after a winter storm, follow these tips:

Listen to authorities for information and instructions.

If heading outside, dress warmly. Wear layers of loose fitting, lightweight, warm clothing. Remove layers to avoid overheating, perspiration, and subsequently chill.

Keep the body replenished with fluids to prevent dehydration. Avoid caffeine and alcohol.

Watch for signs of hyperthermia and frostbite. Frostbite can cause a loss of feeling and a white pale appearance in fingers, toes, nose, or earlobes. Hyperthermia is a condition brought on when the body temperature drops to less than 95°. Symptoms of hyperthermia include uncontrollable shivering, slow speech, memory lapses, frequent stumbling, drowsiness and exhaustion.

If you go out to shovel snow, perform a few stretching exercises to warm up your body. That will reduce your chances of muscle injury.

Avoid overexertion, such as shoveling heavy snow, pushing a car or walking in deep snow. The strain from the cold and the labor may cause a heart attack.

Risk Assessment:

Use a generator or gasoline-powered machinery. ONLY outdoors and away from windows to avoid carbon monoxide poisoning.

Keep vents and flues free from debris,. Flying debris can block ventilation lines and cause carbon monoxide poisoning.

Walk carefully on snowy, icy sidewalks. Slip and falls occur frequently in winter weather, resulting in painful and sometimes disabling injury.

Pet Safety:

Use caution when taking your pet outside. Snow-melting salt can very painful to dogs' feet and cause illness if ingested.