



EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT MONTHLY



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Know the terms

- **Freezing Rain-** Rain that freezes when it hits the ground, creating a coating of ice on bridges, roads, walkways, trees, and power lines.
- **Sleet-** Rain that turns to ice pellets before reaching the ground. Sleet causes moisture on roads which freezes and becomes slippery.
- **Winter storm watch-** A winter storm is possible in your area.
- **Winter storm warning-** A winter storm is occurring or will soon occur in your area.
- **Blizzard Warning-** Sustained winds or frequent gusts to 35 mph or greater and large amounts of falling or blowing snow (reducing visibility to less than a quarter mile) are expected to prevail for a period of three hours or longer.

Winter Weather

Large snowfalls and extreme cold conditions can shut down entire regions. Areas that normally experience mild winters can be struck with heavy snow or extreme cold. Winter storms can cause a number of problems including flooding, storm surge, closed highways, downed power lines and hypothermia. Winter weather frequently catches people unprepared and unaware. Researchers say that 70% of the fatalities related to snow and ice occur in automobiles, and about 25% of all winter related fatalities are people caught unaware, out in the storm. It is important to understand the terms of winter weather and how to protect yourself from it should the need arise.

Dressing for success (in winter weather)

In a winter storm or extreme cold it is important to know how to protect yourself with the right clothing. Wear several layers of loose fitting lightweight, warm clothing rather than one layer of heavy clothing. The outermost garments should be tightly woven and water repellent to protect against the moisture in the environment. Rather than wearing gloves, mittens should be worn because they are warmer. Wear a hat to protect your head. Make sure the hat covers ears and is tightly woven to minimize the escape of heat from the top of head. Cover your mouth with a scarf or mask to protect lungs from the cold.

Trapped in a car during a winter storm

Driving in a winter storm can be very dangerous and it is imperative that the actions to take if stuck in a vehicle are known and adhered to. Pull off the road you are on and engage your hazard lights. Hang a distress flag from the radio antenna or window. Remain in your vehicle where rescuers will find you; do not leave on foot unless you can see a building close by where you can take shelter (Be careful when doing this because distances are distorted by blowing snow.) Run the engine and heater about 10 minutes each hour to keep warm. When running the engine, open an upwind window slightly to avoid carbon monoxide poisoning and periodically clear exhaust pipe of snow. Keep active to maintain body heat, but do not over exert yourself. If multiple people are inside vehicle, one person should be awake at all times to spot rescue crews. Drink fluids to stay hydrated, avoid alcohol and caffeine. Balance electrical needs such as lights, heat, and radio to conserve battery power. Turn on inside light in darkness to be seen by rescuers. If stranded in a remote area, stomp HELP or SOS and line letters with solid materials for recognition by air.

Winter weather vehicle kit

- Have radio or cell phone with fresh or charged batteries if stranded
- Carry extra winter blankets, hats, gloves and clothes adjusted to the amount of people in the vehicle
- Include a snow shovel and rock salt or kitty litter
- Have a flashlight with extra batteries and maps
- Carry a first aid kit with a white distress flag
- Have bottled water and non perishable food such as granola bars and canned foods
- Always have booster cables, flares, and a tire repair kit

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