

# 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

A report that states winter storm conditions are possible in the next two to five 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 warm, lightweight clothing, wear mittens and a hat (preferably one that covers your ears). Stay indoors, if possible.
- 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 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.
- If outside temperatures are consistently 20 degrees or colder, running water, even at a trickle, helps prevent pipes from freezing.
- All fuel burning equipment should be vented to the outside and kept clear.

### 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
- Manual can opener
- Flashlight
- Battery-powered or hand-crank radio. NOAA Weather Radio, if possible.
- Extra batteries (flashlight, radio)
- First aid kit
- Medications (7 day's supply) and medical items
- Sanitation and personal hygiene items
- Baby supplies
- Pet supplies
- Two-way radio or cell phone with extra batteries and/or chargers
- Copies of all important documents
- Family and emergency contact information
- Extra cash
- 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, 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, lightweight clothing in several layers, wear mittens and a hat (preferably one that covers your ears). Stay indoors, if possible.
- Help people who require special assistance such as elderly people living alone, people with disabilities, children, etc.
- 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

Install carbon monoxide (CO) alarms in central locations on every level of your home and outside sleeping areas to provide early warning of accumulating carbon monoxide. Know the difference between the sound of smoke alarms and carbon monoxide alarms. If the CO 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.

### Caring for 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.

### Let Your Family Know You're Safe

If your community experiences a severe winter storm, register on the American Red Cross Safe and Well Web site available through [RedCross.org](https://www.redcross.org) to let your family and friends know about your welfare. If you don't have internet access, call **1-800-RED CROSS** to register yourself and your family.