

Winter Weather PREPAREDNESS



Winter storms are deceptive killers since most of the deaths that occur are indirectly related to the actual storm.

Winter Weather Facts:

- People die in traffic accidents on icy roads
- People die of heart attacks while shoveling snow
- People die of hypothermia from prolonged exposure to the cold

Monitor weather reports so that adequate preparation can be made to lessen the impact of severe weather conditions.

Winter weather terms of the National Weather Service

Blizzard Warning: Issued when snow and strong winds will combine to produce blinding snow (visibilities near zero/white-outs), deep snow drifts, and life-threatening wind chill.

Wind Chill: What the temperature feels like to the human body based on both air temperature and wind speed.

Wind Chill Advisory: Issued when potentially dangerous wind chill readings (-20 to -34 degrees Fahrenheit) are expected.

Wind Chill Watch: Issued when life-threatening wind chill readings (-35 degrees Fahrenheit or lower) are possible.

Wind Chill Warning: Issued when wind chill readings (-35 degrees or lower) are expected to be life-threatening.

Winter Weather Advisory: Issued when winter conditions (snow, sleet, and/or freezing rain/ice) are expected to cause significant inconvenience and may be hazardous.

Winter Storm Watch: Issued when severe winter conditions (heavy snow and/or significant freezing rain/ice) are possible within the next day or two.

Winter Storm Warning: Issued when severe winter conditions have begun or are about to begin in your area. Six (6) inches or more of snow and/or ice accumulations of 1/4 inch or more.

COLD RELATED INJURIES . . .

- Frostbite:** Damage to body tissue caused by that tissue being frozen. Warning signs include loss of feeling and a white or pale appearance in extremities, such as fingers, toes, ear lobes, or the tip of the nose.
- If symptoms are detected, **Get medical help immediately!** If you must wait for help, **Slowly re-warm affected areas. If the person is also showing signs of hypothermia, warm the body core before the extremities.**
- Hypothermia:** Low body temperature. Warning signs include uncontrollable shivering, memory loss, disorientation, incoherence, slurred speech, drowsiness, and apparent exhaustion. If a person's body temperature is below 95 degrees Fahrenheit, **Immediately seek medical attention.**

IF MEDICAL CARE IS NOT AVAILABLE:

- Begin warming the person slowly, warm the body core first. If needed use your own body heat to help.
- Get the person into dry clothing and wrap them in a warm blanket covering them completely, including the head and neck.
- Do not give the person alcohol, drugs, coffee, or any hot beverage or food; warm broth is better.
- Do not warm extremities (arms & legs) first! This drives the cold blood toward the heart and can lead to heart failure.
- Heart Attack:** Strain from the cold and hard labor may cause a heart attack.
- Avoid overexertion, such as shoveling heavy snow, pushing a car, or walking in deep snows, especially if you are not in peak physical condition.
- If you must shovel snow, take it slow and lift small amounts, especially when removing heavy snow, slush or ice.

Food & Drink

Food provides the body with energy for producing its own heat. Keep the body replenished with fluids (water and juice; limit your intake of caffeine and alcohol) to prevent dehydration.

PREPARE IN ADVANCE:

- Keep extra blankets on hand, check battery powered equipment. Store spare batteries.
- If you have propane or oil heat, check your fuel supply.
- Check your food supply and stock up on basic items.
- Winterize your car, keep the fuel tank full.

DRESS APPROPRIATELY:

- Wearing a hat prevents the loss of half your body heat.
- Gloves and warm socks help protect fingers and toes, which is where you can first feel the effects of cold temperatures.
- Wear layers of loose-fitting, warm clothing. Remove layers to avoid overheating, perspiration, and subsequent chill. Layering also helps you prepare for different conditions and activities.
- Use three essential layers:
 - Underwear - choose long underwear, or thin, snug-fitting pants with a long-sleeved T-shirt or turtleneck.
 - Insulation - sweaters, sweatshirts, and other similar garments are good insulators.
 - Outer Shell - Choose garments that are windproof, and preferably waterproof. Good fit is crucial.

