



# A GUIDE TO WINTER STORM PREPAREDNESS

Snow and ice storms can create dangerous situations quickly and cause major issues for homeowners. A blizzard can bring strong winds greater than 35 mph and reduce visibility to less than 1/4 of a mile.

Whiteouts and snowdrifts can occur after a blizzard has passed due to high winds. These conditions can make travel impossible, leaving individuals stranded at home or in vehicles and sometimes without power or resources. Preparation can help you stay safe and reduce your risks.

## SIX KEY STEPS

Six key steps of winter storm preparedness are:

- Stock up
- Seal windows and doors
- Bring pets inside
- Assess your home and yard
- Prevent frozen pipes
- Heat your home safely

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## HOLIDAY TRAVEL SAFETY

If you're traveling during bad winter weather, here are some tips to keep in mind:

- Keep an emergency kit in your vehicle
- Stay calm and focused while driving
- Keep your car up to date on routine maintenance and gas tank full
- Always buckle up
- Ask someone to check on your home, if possible
- Stop somewhere safe if the weather becomes too bad

## HOME EMERGENCY KIT CHECKLIST

- First aid items (bandages, antibacterial cream, gauze, etc.)
- Flashlights and batteries
- Manual can opener
- Water
- Snacks
- Cell phone and chargers
- Extra blankets and coats
- Salt and winter tools

## VEHICLE EMERGENCY KIT CHECKLIST

- Water
- Snacks
- A cell phone charger
- Blankets
- Flashlight
- Jumper cables
- First aid kit
- Windshield scraper and shovel

## STOCK UP

- 3 days' worth of non-perishable food
- 1 gallon of water per person and pet per day
- Hygiene products
- Cleaning supplies
- Prescriptions
- Pet food, cat litter, dog pads, or other pet needs
- Diapers, wipes, and baby formula, and other child needs

# BEFORE THE STORM

## SAFETY TIPS

- Weatherize your home and yard before the winter season begins by improving insulation in the attic, around doors, and windows.
- Whenever possible, bring your pets indoors to keep them warm and safe. If you can't bring pets inside, they should have proper shelter and access to food and water that isn't frozen.
- Inspect your roof, gutters, and chimney before a winter storm for potential issues.
- Remove rotting trees or large branches that could damage your home or power lines during an ice storm.
- Stock up on batteries and flashlights.
- Lower your refrigerator temperature in case of a power outage.
- Keep a power bank charged and on hand.
- Check on your elderly family members, friends, and neighbors, who are especially vulnerable during storms.

## PREVENT FROZEN PIPES:

- Know where your water shut-off valve is located.
- Insulate your water pipes, specifically in unfinished areas such as basements and garages.
- Set your thermostat to a warmer temperature. If possible, keep your home temperature at 65 degrees or higher. If your home is unoccupied, it needs to be 55 degrees or warmer.
- Turn off the water to the exterior hose bibs.
- Keep cabinet doors open to allow warm air to circulate near the pipes, such as under the kitchen and bathroom sinks. Move any chemicals and harmful items so children and pets cannot get to them.
- Allow the faucet to drip overnight to keep water moving and prevent freezing.
- Consider a low-temperature alarm. It will notify you and your alarm monitoring company when temperatures in your home drop to dangerous levels.



## HEAT YOUR HOME SAFELY

- Conserve heat. Close curtains over windows and close doors to rooms you don't need.
- Keep generators at least 20 feet from your home and sheltered from rain and snow.
- Do not leave any candles unattended.
- Make sure your chimney is clean and inspected, and only use dry firewood. Gas fireplaces should be properly ventilated.
- Install a carbon monoxide detector.
- Never plug a space heater into an extension outlet. Plug them directly into the wall socket.
- Keep yourself and your family warm by dressing in layers and using extra blankets.
- For babies who are too young to have soft bedding or loose wear in their cribs, dress them warmer in footed pajamas and sleep sacks.

## OID ASSISTANCE

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