

Before a Winter Storm



Prepare! Don't Let a Winter Storm Take You by Surprise

Before the storm strikes, make sure your home, office and vehicles are stocked with the supplies you might need. Make sure farm animals and pets also have the essentials they will need during a winter storm. [Know how to dress for varying degrees of cold weather.](#)



At Home and Work

Your primary concerns at home or work during a winter storm are loss of heat, power and telephone service and a shortage of supplies if storm conditions continue for more than a day. In either place, you should have available:

- + Flashlight and extra batteries
- + Battery-powered NOAA Weather Radio and portable radio to receive emergency information
- + Extra food and water such as dried fruit, nuts, granola bars and other food requiring no cooking or refrigeration.
- + Extra prescription medicine
- + Baby items such as diapers and formula
- + First-aid supplies
- + Heating fuel: refuel before you are empty; fuel carriers may not reach you for days after a winter storm
- + Emergency heat source: fireplace, wood stove or space heater properly ventilated to prevent a fire
- + Fire extinguisher, smoke alarm; test smoke alarms monthly to ensure they work properly
- + Extra pet food and warm shelter for pets
- + [Review generator safety](#): Never run a generator in an enclosed space
- + Make sure your carbon monoxide detector is working correctly and that the outside vent is clear of leaves and debris. During or after the storm, make sure it is cleared of snow.
- + [Home fires](#) are common each winter when trying to stay warm. Review ways to keep your home and loved ones safe.

In Vehicles

Each year, on average, more than 5,000 people are killed and more than 418,000 are injured due to weather-related vehicle crashes. If you need to drive in snow or cold conditions, **TAKE IT SLOW IN THE SNOW**. Black ice can be difficult to see. If the temperature is near freezing, drive like you're on ice — you may be!

Before you leave the house, especially before a longer trip in winter, make sure all fluid levels are full and ensure that the lights, heater and windshield wipers are in proper condition. Keep your gas tank near full to avoid ice in the tank and fuel lines. Avoid traveling alone. Let someone know your timetable and primary and alternate routes. Then call 511 for the latest traffic and road incidents, including construction and weather conditions and restrictions. Every state offers this Department of Transportation service. Call before you leave; it might change your plans!

Fully check and winterize your vehicle before the winter season begins. Carry a Winter Storm Survival Kit that includes the following:

- + Mobile phone, charger, batteries
- + Blankets/sleeping bags
- + Flashlight with extra batteries
- + First-aid kit
- + Knife
- + High-calorie, non-perishable food
- + Extra clothing to keep dry
- + Large empty can to use as emergency toilet, tissues, toilet paper and paper towels
- + Small can and waterproof matches to melt snow for drinking water
- + Sack of sand or cat litter for traction
- + Shovel
- + Windshield scraper and brush
- + Tool kit
- + Tow rope
- + Battery booster cables
- + Water container
- + Candle and matches to provide light and in an emergency, lifesaving heat.
- + Compass and road maps, don't depend on mobile devices with limited battery life

On the Farm, Pet Owners

- + Move animals to sheltered areas or bring pets inside. Shelter belts, properly laid out and oriented, are better protection for cattle than confining shelters, such as sheds.
- + Haul extra feed to nearby feeding areas.
- + Have water available. Most animals die from dehydration in winter storms.
- + Make sure pets have plenty of food and water and a warm shelter.

Source: <https://www.weather.gov/safety/winter-before>

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