

During a Winter Storm



What To Do If You're Caught in a Winter Storm

When caught in a winter storm, there are life-saving actions you can take to protect yourself outside, in a vehicle and inside your home or office.

Outside

- + **Find Shelter:** Try to stay dry and cover all exposed body parts.
- + **When There Is No Shelter Nearby:** Build a lean-to, windbreak or snow cave for protection from the wind. Build a fire for heat and to attract attention. Place rocks around the fire to absorb and reflect heat.
- + **Melt Snow for Drinking Water:** Eating unmelted snow will lower your body temperature.
- + **Exercise:** From time to time, move arms, legs, fingers and toes vigorously to keep blood circulating and to keep warm. Avoid overexertion such as shoveling heavy snow, pushing a car or walking in deep snow if you are not in good health. The strain from the cold and the hard labor may cause a heart attack. Sweating could lead to a chill and hypothermia.



Inside

Stay Inside: When using heat from a fire place, wood stove, space heater, etc., use fire safeguards and properly ventilate. If you have a gas furnace, make sure it is not blocked by a snowdrift as soon as it's safe to go out. If you have an upstairs gas furnace which vents out the roof, you may need to turn off the upstairs unit until the snow melts off your roof.

IF YOUR HEAT GOES OUT:

- + Close off unneeded rooms to avoid wasting heat.
- + Stuff towels or rags in cracks under doors.
- + Close blinds or curtains to keep in some heat.
- + Eat and drink. Food provides the body with energy for producing its own heat. Drink lots of water and other non-caffeinated, non-alcoholic drinks to prevent dehydration. Cold air is very dry.
- + Wear layers of loose-fitting, lightweight, warm clothing. Remove layers to avoid overheating, perspiration and subsequent chill.

In Vehicles

IF YOU MUST DRIVE DURING A STORM, TAKE THE FOLLOWING PRECAUTIONS:

- + **Slow down!** Even if the roads just look wet they could still be slick. More than 5,000 fatalities occur on the roadways each year due to weather conditions.
- + Make sure your vehicle is completely clear of ice or snow before starting the trip. Flying snow from cars causes accidents.
- + Let someone know where you are going and what route you will take. If something happens, this person will know where to start a search.
- + Don't leave the house without the following a fully charged mobile phone, car charger and an **emergency supplies kit** in your car.
- + If you are driving and begin to skid, remain calm, ease your foot off the gas and turn your wheels in the direction you want the front of the car to go. If you have an anti-lock braking system (ABS), apply steady pressure to the brake pedal. Never pump the brakes on an ABS equipped vehicle.
- + If you are having trouble seeing due to weather conditions, pull over to the side of the road and stop your car until visibility improves. Turn off your lights and use your parking break when stopped so that another car won't mistakenly follow your tail/brake lights and end up hitting you.

IF YOUR CAR GETS STUCK DURING A STORM:

Stay in the vehicle!

- + If you leave your vehicle, you will become disoriented quickly in wind-driven snow and cold
- + Run the motor about 10 minutes each hour for heat
- + While running the motor, open the window a little for fresh air to avoid carbon monoxide poisoning
- + Clear snow from the exhaust pipe to avoid gas poisoning

Be visible to rescuers.

- + Turn on the dome light at night when running the engine
- + Tie a bright colored cloth, preferably red, to your antenna or door
- + After snow stops falling, raise the hood to indicate you need help

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

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