

"For safety's sake—do something."

Preparing for the Winter Months

In General

- Create (or review) your family communications plan. If you are separated, it is important to know how you will contact one another, how you will get back together, and what you will do in case of an emergency.
- Make an emergency kit for at least three days of self-sufficiency.
- Have rock salt or more environmentally safe products to melt ice on walkways.
- Have a cell phone with an emergency charging option (car, solar, hand crank, etc.) in case of a power failure.
- Consider getting a NOAA Weather Radio. It broadcasts alerts and warnings directly from the NWS for all hazards.

Prepare Your Home

- Make sure your home is well insulated, including weather stripping around your doors and window sills.
- Make sure you have a working carbon monoxide detector.
- Keep fire extinguishers on hand, and make sure everyone in your house knows how to use them.
- Learn how to shut off water valves (in case a pipe bursts).
- Space heater safety: Use electric space heaters with automatic shut-off switches and non-glowing elements.
- Remember to keep all heat sources at least three feet away from furniture and drapes.
- Consider hiring a contractor to check the structural ability of your roof to sustain unusually heavy weight from snow accumulation.
- If you have a wood-burning fireplace, make sure your chimney is cleaned and inspected annually.
- In case the power goes out, have an extra heat source; extra blankets, sleeping bags, winter coats, fireplace or wood-burning stove with plenty of dry firewood.

Prepare Your Vehicle

- Fully winterize your vehicle: Have a mechanic check antifreeze, brakes, heater and defroster, tires, and windshield wipers to ensure they are in good shape.
- Keep your gas tank at least half full.
- Keep an extra emergency kit specifically created for your car, including a portable cell phone charger, ice scraper, extra blanket, sand for traction, and jumper cables.

For more tips on preparing for winter, visit: <https://www.ready.gov/winter-weather>