

Prepare Now for Significant Winter Storm and Severe Cold Threat Starting Friday

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CHICAGO – With a forecast beginning Friday across the upper Midwest that includes heavy snow, high winds and blizzard-like conditions followed by severely cold temperatures into next week, the FEMA Region 5 office in Chicago encourages everyone to be [#WinterReady](#) and take precautions now to stay safe.

“Now is the time to make sure you have food, water, medications, and other critical supplies at home to last for several days, especially in case of potential power outages due to heavy snow and high winds,” said FEMA Region 5 Regional Administrator Tom Sivak. “Limit your time outdoors, avoid non-essential travel and listen to local updates for the latest road conditions and closures. When it is safe, check on your neighbors or friends nearby who may need assistance.”

Being [#WinterReady](#) means understanding winter risks you face and taking steps to prepare:

1. **Keep in mind each member of your household’s specific needs when [gathering supplies](#) before the storm.** Don’t forget the needs of pets. Have extra batteries for radios and flashlights, and make sure your phone and other electronic items are fully charged in case you lose power.
2. **Limit your time outside.** If you need to go out, wear layers of warm clothing. Watch for [signs of frostbite and hypothermia](#).
3. **Remember safe home heating practices.** Keep anything that can burn at least three feet from all heat sources including fireplaces, wood stoves, radiators, portable heaters or candles. Always plug space heaters directly into an outlet, and make sure its cord isn’t damaged or frayed. Never use an oven to heat your home.
4. **If there’s a chance you may need assistance during this severe winter weather—for example, clearing snow and ice or moving to a warming center if it becomes necessary**—have the name and contact information



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of a nearby family member or friend who can regularly check in on you.

5. **Follow the instructions of state and local officials** and listen to local radio or TV stations for updated emergency information. Sign up for your community's warning system. The Emergency Alert System (EAS) and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Weather Radio also provide emergency alerts.

Find even more valuable tips to help you prepare for severe winter weather by visiting FEMA's #WinterReady website at [#WinterReady | Ready.gov](#). You can also find helpful preparedness information by downloading the free FEMA app and following us online at [twitter.com/femaregion5](#).

