

Ahead of Expected Nor'easter, FEMA Encourages Communities in the Storm's Path to be #WinterReady

Release Date: Janvye 5, 2024

WASHINGTON -- FEMA is currently monitoring the Nor'easter that is headed toward the East Coast. Regions 1, 2 and 3 are in touch with their regional counterparts ahead of the storm. While the current winter storm is on track with potential heavy snow and treacherous ice to the Northeast and mid-Atlantic this weekend, FEMA is encouraging every community to get prepared this winter season as other storms are expected to follow. Additionally, FEMA encourages people to listen to state and local officials about warming centers, as well as storm warnings and road conditions in your area. To help communities prepare ahead of the expected storm, the Ready Campaign is also releasing a new partner amplification toolkit on our [#WinterReady page](#) and encourages everyone to share good winter preparedness tips with the people they care about.

"With harsh winter weather expected to impact communities across the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic this weekend, it is imperative that everyone in the storm's potential path take precautions, heed the advice of local officials and prepare for the impacts of the storm, which could include heavy snow, ice and power outages," said Secretary of Homeland Security Alejandro N. Mayorkas.

"Americans are at our best when we look out for and take care of one another -- take steps now to help keep yourself, your loved ones, and your neighbors safe. Do not travel unnecessarily, keep emergency supplies readily accessible, take steps to safeguard against home heating fires and carbon monoxide poisoning and visit Ready.gov to access our #WinterReady toolkit and learn more about how you can mitigate winter weather hazards."

"We are currently monitoring the trajectory of the Nor'easter that is expected to impact people across the Northeast, and our FEMA regions in its path are in touch with their state and tribal counterparts," said FEMA Administrator Deanne Criswell. "Now is the time for people to get #WinterReady and take steps to prepare for the



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risks cold weather brings. We encourage people to listen to their local officials and get prepared today.”

[An analysis by the CDC](#) of U.S. temperature-related deaths between 2006 and 2010 showed that 63% were attributable to cold exposure. Cold weather brings other risks, like home fires and travel risks -- especially if you travel by car. That’s why FEMA is encouraging everyone to be #WinterReady so they can stay safe during the winter months. Understanding the hazards and risks associated with cold weather and winter storms is the first step to make sure you’re #WinterReady. Like preparing for other natural hazards, people should have emergency supplies at home, at work and in the car. People should also understand how to prevent home-heating fires and carbon monoxide poisoning.

FEMA encourages people to visit [#WinterReady | Ready.gov](#) to learn about some of the common hazards people might face when the weather turns cold. FEMA also has a list of [low-cost solutions for home heating](#), advice for [older adults and those who work or play outside](#) or [don’t typically experience winter weather](#).

“Fire unfortunately affects our most vulnerable populations year around, but fire risks go up during winter when many people experience heat insecurity and use space heaters or even cooking stoves to keep warm,” said USFA Administrator Dr. Lori Moore-Merrell. “Extra vigilance toward fire safety is a must during the winter months, because fire is fast and can change lives in an instant. Be #WinterReady and #FireSafe!”

Fire continues to have major impacts on our communities, our most vulnerable populations and our responders. This winter season, the U.S. Fire Administration (USFA) and FEMA are encouraging communities to be #WinterReady and create a fire safety plan for themselves and their families. Most fires are preventable, and the steps people take to prepare now can help save lives. Unfortunately, during 2023, the U.S. reached nearly 2,200 home-fire fatalities, including 494 persons over 65 and 230 children, in addition to the loss of 82 firefighters.

Preparing for Winter Conditions

- **Know Your Risk:** Track the weather conditions near you and any place you travel. Get information from the National Weather Service, your local officials



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and download the [FEMA App](#) to get weather alerts.

- **Create a Winter Emergency Kit:** Assemble a kit containing essential supplies, including blankets, non-perishable food, water, medications and a flashlight for your home. Keep essential supplies in your car as well, including food and water, a shovel, windshield scraper, blankets, tow chains, reflectors and other supplies, in case you become stranded.
- **Older Adults May Have Unique Needs:** Engage your support network if you need help cleaning ice and snow so you can keep walkways and steps clear. Have the name and contact information of a nearby family member or friend who can regularly check in on you.
- **About 30% of a Home's Heating Energy is Lost Through its Windows:** Keep window coverings like blinds or curtains open during the day to take advantage of the sun's heat in the winter -- especially windows that get direct sunlight.
- **Save on Heating Bills:** Close the doors of rooms you are not using. Close the vents and shut the doors in these rooms and keep the basement door closed. Place a rolled towel at the bottom of all doors to keep drafts out. Close them at night to keep heat from escaping.
- **Develop an Emergency Plan:** Establish a clear and concise communications plan with your loved ones so you know how to get in touch in an emergency. Before a winter storm or drop in temperatures, check in on your neighbors and friends, especially older adults or others who may have unique needs, to help them prepare.
- **Stay Informed:** Keep abreast of local weather forecasts and official alerts. Stay informed about any advisories, watches or warnings issued by authorities. This information is critical for making timely and informed decisions during severe weather events.
- **Protect Your Home:** Winterize your home by insulating pipes, sealing drafts and checking heating systems. Home heating is the second leading cause of home fires and winter is when most home fires happen, so ensure that heating sources are in good working condition. Taking these precautions can prevent damage and ensure a warm and safe living environment.
- **Practice Safe Driving:** If travel is necessary during adverse weather conditions, drive cautiously. It takes longer to slow down and stop on icy roads, so increase your following distance from three-four seconds to five-six seconds. Keep a winter emergency kit in your vehicle and be aware of road conditions.



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Practicing Fire Safety Ahead of Winter Storms

- **Fireplace and Space Heater Safety:** There is an increase in fire deaths and injuries during the winter months. As the temperatures cool, many people use fireplaces or space heaters. While these heat sources can keep us warm, they can be dangerous if not used safely. That's why it's important to take steps to keep yourself safe. Keep blankets and anything that can burn at least 3 feet away from heat sources.
- **Protecting Against Carbon Monoxide:** You need working smoke alarms on every level of the home, including the basement, as well as inside bedrooms and outside sleeping areas. Interconnected smoke alarms provide the best protection because when one sounds, they all sound. Carbon monoxide is colorless, odorless and tasteless. You may not know when the levels are high until it is too late. Make sure you have a CO alarm on every level of your home.
- **Replacing Old Smoke Alarms:** A smoke alarm with a dead or missing battery is the same as having no smoke alarm at all. Resolve to test all your smoke alarms each month. Replace alarms that are 10 years old or if they don't sound when you test them.
- **Developing a Fire Escape Plan:** Have a home fire escape plan and make sure everyone in your home knows what to do and where to go if there is a fire. If you live in a multi-story building, learn your building's emergency plan. Knowing and practicing both plans will help you get to safety quickly.

