

# FEMA Encourages Communities Nationwide to Prepare Ahead of Winter Storm

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WASHINGTON -- Severe winter weather is expected to impact communities nationwide, with the potential to create hazardous conditions across the country. The worst impacts are expected in eastern Wisconsin, Michigan, northern Indiana, northeast Illinois and northern Ohio, including limited accessibility and travel due to snow covered roads, as well as power outages and wind chills well below zero.

“Much of our country is currently facing record breaking cold weather temperatures that can carry significant threats. From power outages to sub-zero temperatures, we encourage people to take the necessary precautions to protect themselves, their families and their property,” said FEMA Administrator Deanne Criswell. “Those traveling for the holidays should also exercise extreme caution and heed warnings from local officials regarding travel conditions.”

This morning, Administrator Criswell briefed President Biden on the impending winter storm and the actions FEMA is taking to ensure the agency is prepared to answer the call should disaster strike. Specifically, FEMA has been closely coordinating with FEMA regional offices, who are in constant contact with their state partners, and the agency is prepared to support other requests for assistance as needed.

Additionally, FEMA has strategically located distribution centers throughout the country and agency teams are on standby to distribute commodities and equipment as necessary. Moreover, FEMA’s Regional and National Incident Management Assistance Teams are available to deploy at a moment’s notice, along with FEMA’s Urban Search and Rescue teams.

At the request of the Oglala Sioux and Rosebud Sioux Tribal Nations, FEMA is also pre-positioning generators and supporting equipment, and a FEMA staging management team and Army Corps of Engineers Power Team is prepared for



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rapid deployment and generator hook-ups if necessary.

Here are some tips to help individuals, families and business owners prepare:

## **Have a plan**

Severe winter weather can include snow or subfreezing temperatures, strong winds and ice or heavy rainstorms. What would you do if you are stranded at home or on the road? How will your family reunite if separated by severe weather? Do you have food and supplies on hand to survive for at least three days, especially without power? Your plan should cover a range of hazards with an immediate focus on winter weather-related hazards including power outages. To learn more, go to: [Make A Plan | Ready.gov](#) (English) or [Haga un Plan | Ready.gov](#) (Spanish).

## **Gather emergency supplies for your home**

Include a three-day supply of food and water for each person along with items for any pets, as well as personal essentials such as medicine and clothing, a battery-powered or hand-crank radio, extra flashlights and batteries and first-aid supplies.

## **Gather emergency supplies for your vehicle**

It's best to avoid traveling by car if there is a severe weather threat. If it's unavoidable, make sure to have emergency supplies in the vehicle. These supplies should include the same essentials as you have at home, plus the following:

- Adequate clothing and blankets to help keep you warm – don't forget mittens, scarves and hats
- Sand to improve traction
- A snow shovel
- Cash (ATMs won't work without power)
- Jumper cables
- Bottled water and non-perishable snacks
- A full tank of gas *before* the storm arrives



If you need to go outside, limit your time there and wear layers of warm clothing. During winter weather, it is important to watch for signs of frostbite and hypothermia. Winter weather also increases the risk of heart attacks from overexertion, use caution when doing physical activity such as shoveling snow. For more information, go to: [Winter Weather | Ready.gov](#) (English) or [Tormentas invernales | Ready.gov](#) (Spanish).

**Monitor media for updated information on the storm and/or actions to take.**

**Follow the directions provided by local, state or tribal officials regarding emergency actions.**

If you are told to stay off the roads, don't venture out. Shelter in place at your home or business.

**Check on your neighbors or friends**, particularly those who are vulnerable or need extra support.

Older adults and individuals who are dependent on life-sustaining medical equipment or assistance devices such as a ventilator or mobility devices, may need additional support in areas that have lost power.

#### **Other Important Tips:**

**Never use a generator inside a home, basement, shed or garage**, even if doors and windows are open. Keep generators outside and far away from windows, doors and vents. Read and follow instructions on the generator label and in the owner's manual. Any electrical cables you use with the generator should be free of damage and suitable for outdoor use.

**Never use charcoal grills or camp stoves indoors.** Deaths have occurred when consumers burned charcoal or used camp stoves in enclosed spaces, which produced lethal levels of carbon monoxide.

**Stay away from downed wires**, including cable TV feeds. They may be live with deadly voltage.

**Use caution with candles.** If possible, use flashlights instead. If you must use candles, do not burn them on or near anything that can catch fire. Never leave burning candles unattended. Extinguish candles when you leave the room.

