



Scenario 11: Winter Storms Answer Key

1. Your family emergency kit should include the following items: water (1 gallon per person, per day) and/or water purification tablets, First-Aid kit, flashlight, batteries, hand-crank/solar powered radio, non-perishable food, cash (in small amounts), wrench (to turn off utilities), hand sanitizer, mylar blanket, ear plugs, and a book and/or deck of cards. Consider having a kit with similar items for your pet(s), if applicable. Consider adding hand and/or foot warmers and other cold weather items to be better prepared for severe winter weather.

Items to include in your emergency kit for your car should include: a shovel, windshield scraper and small broom, flashlight, battery powered radio, extra batteries, water, non-perishable foods, matches, extra hats and gloves, first aid kit, necessary medications, blanket, tow chain or rope, road salt or sand or cat litter, booster cable or charger, emergency flares, and fluorescent distress flag. To learn about driving in severe winter weather, please follow this link:

<https://autoclubsouth.aaa.com/Assets/PDFs/HowtogoIceandSnow.pdf>

2. Important Winter Storm Terms:

- **Winter Weather Advisory**
Winter weather conditions are expected to cause significant inconveniences and may be hazardous. Conditions are not expected to be life threatening.
- **Winter Storm Watch**
A winter storm is possible in your area; in which severe conditions, such as heavy snow and ice, may affect your area but the location and time is uncertain. Watches are issued 12–36 hours in advance of a storm.
- **Winter Storm Warning**
A winter storm is occurring or will soon occur in your area.
- **Blizzard Warning**
Sustained winds or frequent gusts of 35 mph or greater, and considerable amounts of falling or blowing snow (reducing visibility to less than a quarter mile) are expected to prevail for a period of three hours or longer.

Additional information about these terms may be found by following this link:

<http://www.weather.gov/bgm/WinterTerms>

3. A **Code Blue Alert** is issued by counties across states regarding extreme cold weather. A **Code Blue Alert** is declared when temperatures drop below freezing and weather conditions pose a danger to all people, especially the homeless. There are designated “warming centers” in your county that you can go to in the event of a power outage during a Code Blue Alert.
4. Hypothermia and frostbite are two extremely dangerous health conditions. Frostbite causes loss of feeling and color around a person’s face, fingers, and toes. Signs of frostbite include: numbness, white or gray-yellow skin, or firm and waxy skin. To address frostbite, take the affected person to a warm room and soak them in warm water. Use body heat to warm them, and do not massage them or use a heating pad – this can be dangerous to their extremities. If left untreated, frostbite could lead to necrosis, or tissue death.

Hypothermia is an unusually low body temperature. A body temperature below 95 degrees is an emergency. Signs of hypothermia include: shivering, exhaustion, confusion, shaking hands, memory loss, slurred speech, or drowsiness. To address hypothermia, go to a warm room and warm the center of



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the body first – chest, neck, and head. Keep the person dry and wrapped up in warm blankets, including their head and neck.

5. To winterize your car, check or have a mechanic check: antifreeze levels, battery and ignition system, brakes, exhaust system, fuel and air filters, heater and defroster, lights and flashing hazard lights, oil, thermostat, windshield wiper equipment, and tires.
6. Simple tips for winterizing your home include: insulating walls and attics, caulking and weather-stripping windows, install storm windows, maintaining heating equipment and chimneys with yearly inspections, proper storage of fuel-burning equipment, maintaining fire extinguishers and keeping them on hand, shutting off water valves, and hiring a contractor to check the structural ability of your roof to sustain a heavy amount of snow. Additional information about how to “winterize” your home may be found by following this link: <https://www.ready.gov/winter-weather>
7. To reduce the threat of carbon monoxide poisoning, never use a generator, grill, camp stove, or other gasoline, natural gas, or charcoal burning device inside a home, garage, basement, crawlspace or enclosed area. Keep devices at least 20 feet from doors, windows, or vents. Install carbon monoxide detectors in central locations and on every level of your home, particularly outside of sleeping areas.

Additional information about carbon monoxide poisoning and carbon monoxide detectors may be found by following these links:

<http://www.cdc.gov/disasters/carbonmonoxide.html>

http://www.redcross.org/images/MEDIA_CustomProductCatalog/m4340092_FireCOFactSheet.pdf

8. Actions that will help you stay safe during a snowstorm and lower temperatures:
 - Stay indoors.
 - Walk carefully on snowy, icy walkways.
 - Avoid overexertion when shoveling snow. Take frequent breaks, push the shovel instead of lifting it; use mechanical snow removal equipment, if possible.
 - Drive only if necessary. If you must drive, try to drive during the day, do not travel alone, keep others informed of your schedule, and stay on main roads and avoid secondary roads and shortcuts.
 - Remove snow from any ventilation systems in your house.

More information about staying safe during a winter storm may be found by following these links:

<http://www.cdc.gov/disasters/winter/duringstorm/outdoorsafety.html>

9. Generators may help to ensure that the mechanical devices in your home will function in the event of a power outage. While beneficial, the manufacturer’s safety guidelines must always be followed.
 - The generator must always be positioned outside the structure, as generator use is a major cause of carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning. Information about the dangers of carbon monoxide can be found at: <http://www.cdc.gov/disasters/carbonmonoxide.html>
 - If water has been present anywhere near electrical circuits and electrical equipment, turn off the power at the main breaker or fuse on the service panel.
 - Do not turn the power back on until the equipment has been inspected by a qualified electrician.
10. Generators may help to ensure that the mechanical devices in your home will function in the event of a power outage. While beneficial, the manufacturer’s safety guidelines must always be followed:



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 - Do not turn the power back on until electrical equipment has been inspected by a qualified electrician.
11. If you must drive during the snowstorm and you get stuck in the storm:
- Pull off the road, turn hazards on, and hang a distress flag from the radio antenna or window
 - Remain in your vehicle where you're most likely to be found. Only try to walk if you can see a building to walk too.
 - Run the engine and heater about 10 minutes each hour to keep warm and conserve fuel. Open a window slightly for ventilation and periodically clear snow away from the exhaust pipe.
 - Eat regularly and drink plenty of fluid but avoid drinking caffeine or alcohol.
 - If you're with someone, take turns sleeping. Someone should be awake to look for rescuers or passing help.
12. A loss of power in your home will cause these devices to stop operating. To maintain continuity of these devices, consider installing a generator adjacent to the exterior of your home. Additional measures include:
- Never use candles for light or warmth as doing so could lead to a fire.
 - Keep refrigerator doors closed. Many will keep food safely refrigerated for several hours after a power outage. More information about food safety following a power outage can be found at: <http://www.cdc.gov/disasters/foodwater/facts.html>
 - Consider spending the day in a public venue, such as a shopping mall, movie theater, or public library that was not impacted and will likely be climate controlled.
 - Consider having a backup plan for your home devices. More information about this is available at: <https://www.ready.gov/business/implementation/IT>
13. Steps to avoid injuries during a power outage:
- Check with local authorities to be sure your water is safe.
 - In cold weather, wear layers of clothing. This will help to keep in body heat.
 - Avoid downed power lines. If a power line falls on your car, you should stay inside the vehicle until help arrives.
 - For more information about how to avoid injuries during a power outage, please visit: <http://cdc.gov/disasters/poweroutage/needtoknow.html>
14. To determine the location of the closest shelter, check with your local or county Office of Emergency Management (OEM). Another viable option is to establish a relationship with your local Chapter of the American Red Cross, which may be found by following this link: <http://www.redcross.org/find-your-local-chapter>.

Go-Kits are a critical part of being prepared and may allow you to be self-sufficient for up to 72 hours (three days) or until help arrives. At the very minimum, your family Go-Kit should include the following items: water (one gallon, per person, per day) and/or water purification tablets, a first aid kit, a flashlight, batteries, a hand-crank/solar-powered radio, non-perishable food, medications/prescription glasses, baby food, formula, diapers, cash (in small denominations), a wrench (to turn off utilities), hand



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sanitizer, a Mylar blanket, ear plugs, and a book/deck of cards. Consider also having a Go-Kit for your pets and include food, treats, medication, and favorite toys/blankets.

More information about which items to include in your Go-Kit and pet preparedness may be found by following these links:

<https://www.ready.gov/build-a-kit>

<https://www.ready.gov/caring-animals>

15. This may include having items and services in place before it becomes necessary to go to a shelter. If a loved one is comforted by a certain item (a blanket, photograph, stuffed animal, etc.), be sure to pack the item when evacuating. If a relative requires regularly scheduled mental health therapy, then make sure that his/her mental health provider is aware of the location of the shelter.