

Winter Storm Approaching So Now is the Time to Prepare

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KANSAS CITY, Mo. – Severe winter weather is expected to take aim at much of the Midwest this week so emergency management professionals are urging residents and business owners to be ready for everything from snow covered roads and power outages, to wind chills well below zero.

“Now is the time to get prepared,” said Andrea Spillars administrator of the Kansas City, Mo. office of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). “With dangerous winter weather around the corner, we’re urging residents and business owners in Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska and Iowa to take this storm seriously, get ready now and stay informed.”

Officials from the National Weather Service and FEMA’s Region 7 office in Kansas City have been monitoring the development of a powerful winter weather system that will likely impact multiple states in the Midwest. Forecast models indicate the winter system could bring dangerously cold temperatures and strong winds, which could generate blizzard conditions that may cause treacherous road conditions, damage to structures, and may result in power outages.

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: www.ready.gov/make-a-plan.



FEMA

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, 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 outside 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: www.ready.gov/winter-weather

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 assistive 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.

