

The primary concern during a winter storm includes: the inability to travel, loss of heat, power, gas supply, and telephone service. There may be a shortage of essential supplies in the home such as food, water, and medications. Every household should have an emergency preparedness plan in-place. Start by posting important numbers by the telephone, such as utility companies and emergency responders. The plan should include a winter weather kit that can be easily put together. Below is a list of essential items:

### Winter Weather Preparedness Kit:

- Flashlights and extra batteries
- Battery-powered NOAA weather radio and a portable AM/FM radio
- Extra food and water, such as non-perishable/high energy foods and snacks
- Extra medications
- Extra baby items, especially if you have an infants or small children
- Basic First-Aid supplies
- Blankets, sleeping bags, and extra clothing for warmth
- Charge all cell phones ahead of time
- Gather and store extra firewood in a dry sheltered area
- Have all home heating appliances serviced by a qualified technician.



### Home Heating/Safety Indoors:

Always keep safety in mind when using home heating appliances. Build a small fire in the fireplace to heat a room. A fire that is too big or too hot could damage the chimney and catch the house on fire. Make sure the fire in the fireplace is completely out before leaving the home or when going to sleep. Never use a charcoal grill or patio fireplace inside the home.

Space heaters can be dangerous if not used properly. Keep plenty of space around the heater and remember to turn the heater off if you leave the room for an extended period of time or when going to sleep. Never place combustibles such as clothing, furniture, or bedding too close to the space heater.

Kerosene heaters should only be used in well ventilated areas. In order to refuel a kerosene heater, allow the heater to properly cool – always refuel outdoors. Remember to use the proper type of fuel for kerosene heaters. Never mix kerosene with other types of fuels. Kerosene heaters should not be left burning for an extended period of time, especially when leaving the home or going to sleep.

Use flashlights indoors to see in the dark during temporary power outages. If using candles, remember to keep them out of the reach of children and pets, and away from high traffic areas in the home. Blow out candles before leaving the room or when going to sleep. Always use sturdy candle holders and place candles on uncluttered flat surfaces. Avoid placing candles in bedrooms where you could fall asleep.

### Generators:

If you lose power and decide to employ a portable generator, remember to keep the generator outside, a safe distance away from the house. Generators could cause carbon monoxide poisoning if not used properly. Never use generators inside a basement or garage. The generator should be placed outside in a properly ventilated area. Use only the amount of power necessary to maintain essential appliances and lights.

### Safety Outdoors:

The prolonged cold temperatures could cause a thin sheet of ice to form on open bodies of water. Avoid any frozen body of water such as a lake, creek, ditch, or pond. The ice will not be thick enough or strong enough to support the weight of a child or small pet. Post warning signs around frozen bodies of water. **Simply put, stay off the ice!**

Avoid contact with downed power lines. If you lose power, don't go outside in the dark to investigate. Contact with an energized electrical line may cause severe injury or even death. All downed power lines should be considered "live". Report downed power lines to the fire department and the appropriate utility company. Limit time outdoors in the cold. Prolonged exposure to cold may cause hypothermia or frostbite.

Wear multiple layers of clothing and remember to cover your hands, face, and ears as much as possible. Consider safety precautions for small (outdoor) pets. Bring pets indoors if at all possible. The improper use of heat lamps for pets should be avoided due to the potential fire hazard or injury to pets.

Stay tuned to local news outlets to monitor road conditions and changing weather information.