

Cold Weather Safety

- Check daily on elderly friends, relatives and neighbors who live alone.
- Elderly should stay indoors as much as possible. Just like in the summer with heat, it takes time to get acclimated to cold weather.
- Wear layered clothing outdoors for better protection from the cold. Wear a cap to prevent rapid heat loss from an uncovered head. Cover exposed skin to prevent frostbite.
- While indoors, try to keep at least one room heated to 70 degrees. This is especially important for the elderly to prevent hypothermia.
- Avoid drinking alcoholic beverages.
- Eat high energy foods along with warm beverages and soup.
- Sleep warm with extra blankets, a warm cap, socks and layered clothing.
- Avoid fatigue and exhaustion during cold weather. Overexertion, such as shoveling snow or pushing a car, can strain your heart.
- Carry extra clothing, blankets and high energy snacks, such as cereal or candy bars in your car for protection if car stalls. Keep the gas tank near full to prevent icing. Don't travel alone.
- Be careful when using fireplaces, stoves or space heaters to stay warm. Carbon monoxide poisoning and home fires are very real winter hazards.

Around the Home

- Keep informed of advancing winter weather by listening local weather news on TV or radio.
- Check battery powered equipment before the storm arrives and keep a fresh supply of batteries. If you have a cell phone, keep it fully charged.
- Check your supply of medications and keep a several day supply on hand.
- Check your food and stock an extra supply. Make sure pets and animals have shelter and a water supply.
- Check your supply of heating fuel. Fuel carriers may not be able to reach you due to ice or snow covered roads.
- Be careful when using fireplaces, stoves or space heaters. Proper ventilation is essential. Don't use charcoal. Keep flammable material away from space heaters and do not overload electric circuits.
- Dress for the conditions when outdoors. Wear several layers of light-weight, warm clothing; layers can be removed to prevent perspiring and subsequent chill. Outer garments should be tightly woven, waterproof and hooded. For the hands, mittens, snug at the wrists, offer better protection than fingered gloves.
- Shoveling snow is extremely hard work for anyone in less than prime physical condition. It can bring on a heart attack, a major cause of death during and after winter storms.

In the Car

- Winter travel by car is serious business. If the storm exceeds or tests your driving ability, seek available shelter immediately.
- Get your car winterized before winter arrives. The following items should be checked:

Cooling system
Battery
Heater
Oil

Fuel system
Lights
Defroster
Brakes

Exhaust system
Tires
Windshield wipers

- Keeping your fuel tank full will help prevent condensation that can cause water in your tank.
- If you have a cell phone and car charger, keep the cell phone on your person and the charger in your car. Keep the cell phone battery as fully charged as possible.
- If you travel often during the winter, carry a winter storm kit in your car. It should include:
 - flashlight with extra batteries
 - windshield scraper
 - deicing fluid
 - paper towels
 - extra clothes including boots, gloves and a coat
 - booster cables
 - rock salt, ice melt and / or sand
 - shovel
 - blankets
 - high calorie, non-perishable food
 - bottled water
- Plan your travel. Try not to travel alone and notify others of your planned travel time and route.
- Drive carefully and defensively. Pump the brakes when trying to stop on snow or ice covered roads.
- If you are stranded in your car try to secure a brightly colored cloth to a high point on your vehicle. Leave lights on when the motor is running. Start the motor and operate the car heater for 10 minutes each hour. Open one window an inch when the motor is running and the car is stopped to allow ventilation. Keep windows closed when the motor is not running.

Extreme Cold

Extreme cold temperatures are a big danger during winter months. Prolonged exposure to the cold can cause frostbite, hypothermia, or in extreme cases death. In fact, excessive cold is one of the leading weather-related causes of death in the state. Elderly are most susceptible to extreme cold.

- Frostbite occurs when the skin becomes cold enough to actually freeze. A loss of feeling and a white or pale appearance in extremities, such as fingers, toes, ear lobes, or the nose are symptoms of frostbite.
- Hypothermia (Low Body Temperature) can occur during longer periods of exposure when the body temperature drops below 95 degrees. A person will become disoriented, confused, and shiver uncontrollably, eventually leading to drowsiness and apparent exhaustion. In severe cases, death is possible.