

After the Storm

- Immediately report downed power lines and broken gas lines or water lines.
- After blizzards, heavy snows, or extreme cold, check to see that no physical damage has occurred and that water pipes are functioning. If there are no other problems, wait for streets and roads to be opened before you attempt to drive anywhere.
- Check on neighbors, especially any who might need help.
- Beware of overexertion and exhaustion. Shoveling snow in extreme cold causes many heart attacks. Set your priorities, and pace yourself after any disaster that leaves you with a mess to clean up. The natural tendency is to do too much too soon.

Community & Financial Preparedness

- Have a family meeting to identify what to do if an ice or snow storm occurs and you are not at home.
- Learn who to call for help.
- Visit with neighbors to determine how you can work together during an emergency.
- Review basic safety measures, such as first-aid and CPR.
- Review specific damage coverage provided by your home insurance policy.
- Prepare records that will verify losses for insurance, tax, or federal disaster purposes.

References



Additional Resources

Winter Preparedness Safety Tips

<http://www.fema.gov/hazards/winterstorms/wntsft.shtm>

Keeping Food Safe during an Emergency

<http://www.fsis.usda.gov/oa/pubs/pofeature.htm>

Emergency Food and Water Supplies

<http://www.fema.gov/library/emfdwtr.shtm>

Citizen Preparedness Publications

http://www.citizencorps.gov/ready/cc_pubs.shtm

Carbon Monoxide

http://www.montana.edu:80/wwwcxair/facts_co.html

Your local Texas AgriLife Extension Service county agent (listed under county government)

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Preparing for the Unexpected



Winter Storms



Get Informed

Blizzards, heavy snow, freezing rain, ice, and freezing temperatures occasionally hit hard in parts of Texas. Even if you think you are safe and warm at home, a winter storm can become dangerous if the power goes off. With a little planning, you can protect yourself and your family and keep your property losses to a minimum.

Learn what the National Weather Service winter weather advisories mean:

- Winter weather advisory—severe weather conditions exist;
- Winter storm watch—severe winter weather conditions may affect your area;
- Winter storm warning—severe winter weather conditions are imminent;
- Freezing rain or freezing drizzle—rain or drizzle is likely to freeze upon impact, resulting in a coating of ice glaze on roads and all other exposed objects;
- Sleet—small particles of ice, usually mixed with rain;
- Blizzard warning—sustained wind speeds of at least 35 miles per hour are accompanied by considerable falling and/or blowing snow;
- Wind chill—strong wind combined with a temperature below freezing can have the same chilling effect as a temperature nearly 50 degrees lower in a calm atmosphere.

Be Prepared

Have emergency supplies in a portable kit:

- flashlight, portable battery-operated radio, and extra batteries
- first-aid kit and manual, and essential medicines (week supply)
- at least three gallons of water per person
- protective clothing, bedding, and sturdy shoes
- emergency food that can be prepared without an electric or gas range, and a manual can opener
- an alternate heat source, such as a fireplace, space heater, catalytic camp stove, wood heater, or gas heater
- special items for infant, elderly, or disabled family members
- written instructions on how to turn off electricity, gas, and water if authorities advise you to do so

Develop emergency communication plan:

- Ideally, you can get the family together when you know severe winter weather is approaching. However, you should select an out-of-town friend or relative for everyone to check in with if family members are in different locations during a severe storm. Make sure everyone in the family knows the name, address, and phone number of this contact person.
- Know ahead of time what you should do to help elderly or disabled friends, neighbors, or employees.

Respond

If you are isolated at home **during the storm**, listen to the radio or television for updates on weather conditions. During severe winter storms, your home heating system could be inoperative for several days. To minimize discomfort and possible health problems during this time:

- Conserve body heat by dressing warmly. Layer your clothing. Many layers of thin clothing are warmer than a single layer of thick clothing. Mittens are warmer than gloves. Wear a hat or cap to prevent body heat loss through the top of the head. If necessary, cover your mouth with scarves to protect your lungs from directly inhaling extremely cold air.
- Improvise with an alternative heat source.
- Confine heating to a single room. Try to select a room on the “warm” side of the house. Close off all rooms except the one to be heated.
- Think **safety**. Do not burn outdoor barbecue materials, such as charcoal briquettes, inside—even in a fireplace.
- Maintain adequate ventilation to avoid build-up of carbon monoxide when using combustion heating. One person should stay awake to make sure nothing catches fire and that there is adequate ventilation.