
Winter Weather Checklists

Stock up on emergency supplies for communication, food, safety, heating, and car in case a storm hits.

Communication Checklist

- Make sure you have at least one of the following in case there is a power failure:
 - Battery-powered radio (for listening to local emergency instructions). Have extra batteries.
 - National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) weather radio receiver (for listening to National Weather Service broadcasts). See www.nws.noaa.gov/nwr for more information.
- Find out how your community warns the public about severe weather:
 - Siren
 - Radio
 - TV
- Listen to emergency broadcasts.
- Know what winter storm warning terms mean:
 - Winter weather advisory: expect winter weather conditions to cause inconvenience and hazards.
 - Frost/freeze warning: expect below-freezing temperatures.
 - Winter storm watch: be alert; a storm is likely.
 - Winter storm warning: take action; the storm is in or entering the area.
 - Blizzard warning: seek refuge immediately! Snow and strong winds, near-zero visibility, deep snow drifts, and life-threatening wind chill

Food and Safety Checklist

[Have a week's worth of food and safety supplies. If you live far from other people, have more supplies on hand.](#)

- Drinking water
- Canned/no-cook food (bread, crackers, dried fruits)
- Non-electric can opener
- Baby food and formula (if baby in the household)
- Prescription drugs and other medicine

- First-aid kit
- Rock-salt to melt ice on walkways
- Supply of cat litter or bag of sand to add traction on walkways
- Flashlight and extra batteries
- Battery-powered lamps or lanterns
(To prevent the risk of fire, avoid using candles.)

Water Checklist

Keep a water supply. Extreme cold can cause water pipes in your home to freeze and sometimes break.

- Leave all water taps slightly open so they drip continuously.
- Keep the indoor temperature warm.
- Allow more heated air near pipes. Open kitchen cabinet doors under the kitchen sink.
- If your pipes do freeze, do not thaw them with a torch. Thaw the pipes slowly with warm air from an electric hair dryer.
- If you cannot thaw your pipes, or if the pipes have broken open, use bottled water or get water from a neighbor's home.
- Have bottled water on hand.
- In an emergency—if no other water is available—snow can be melted for water. Bringing water to a rolling boil for one minute will kill most germs but won't get rid of chemicals sometimes found in snow.

Heating Checklist

- Have at least one of the following heat sources in case the power goes out:
 - Fireplace with plenty of dry firewood or gas log fireplace
 - Portable space heaters or kerosene heaters
- Check with your local fire department to make sure that kerosene heaters are legal in your area.
- Never place a space heater on top of furniture or near water.
- Use electric space heaters with
 - automatic shut-off switches and
 - nonglowing elements.
- Keep heat sources at least 3 feet away from furniture and drapes.

- Never leave children unattended near a space heater.
- Have the following safety equipment:
 - Chemical fire extinguisher
 - Smoke alarm in working order (Check once a month and change batteries once a year.)
 - Carbon monoxide detector
- Never use an electric generator indoors, inside the garage, or near the air intake of your home because of the risk of carbon monoxide poisoning:
 - Do not use the generator or appliances if they are wet.
 - Do not store gasoline indoors where the fumes could ignite.
 - Use individual heavy-duty, outdoor-rated cords to plug in other appliances.

Cooking and Lighting Checklist

- Never use charcoal grills or portable gas camp stove indoors—the fumes are deadly.
- Use battery-powered flashlights or lanterns.
- Avoid using candles.
- Never leave lit candles alone.

Car and Emergency Checklist

[Prepare your car with emergency supplies.](#)

- Cell phone; portable charger and extra batteries
- Shovel
- Windshield scraper
- Battery-powered radio (and extra batteries)
- Flashlight (and extra batteries)
- Water
- Snack food
- Extra hats, coats, mittens
- Blankets
- Chains or rope
- Tire chains

- Canned compressed air with sealant (emergency tire repair)
- Road salt and sand
- Booster cables
- Emergency flares
- Bright colored flag; help signs
- First aid kit
- Tool kit
- Road maps
- Compass
- Waterproof matches and a can (to melt snow for water)
- Paper towels

All information provided by the Centers for Disease Control as of 1/5/09.