



WINTER STORM

Winter storms present a serious threat due to a combination of intense cold and heavy snowfall. These conditions are hazardous to all populations, regardless of typical winter weather experience. Heavy snowfall significantly reduces visibility, creating dangerous driving conditions and potentially trapping individuals indoors. Furthermore, winter storms often involve additional hazards such as high winds, sleet, freezing rain, icy roadways, power outages, and life-threatening cold temperatures.



Winter Storm Preparedness & Response

Pre-Storm Preparation

- **Situational Awareness:** Monitor weather forecasts and understand potential risks in your area.
- **Terminology:** Know the definitions of key weather terms:
 - **Freezing Rain:** Rain that freezes on contact, creating ice.
 - **Sleet:** Rain that freezes *before* hitting the ground (ice pellets).
 - **Winter Storm Watch:** Conditions are favorable for a storm – stay informed.
 - **Winter Storm Warning:** A storm is imminent or occurring.
 - **Blizzard Warning:** Sustained winds 35+ mph, considerable snow, visibility < ¼ mile for 3+ hours.
 - **Frost/Freeze Warning:** Below-freezing temperatures expected.
- **Home Preparation:**
 - Ensure proper insulation.
 - Seal doors & windows with caulk/weather strip.
 - Insulate pipes to prevent freezing.
 - Prepare alternative heating sources (fireplace, vented stove, heater – *check local fire codes*).
 - Maintain knowledge of heating systems & safety.
 - Keep home above freezing, even when away, to prevent bursting pipes.
- **Vehicle Preparation:** Keep gas tank full.
 - **Supplies:**
 - Winter clothing & blankets.
 - Emergency kit: rock salt/sand, snow shovels, batteries, radio, flashlight.
 - Pre-treat driveways/steps with rock salt.

During a Winter Storm

- **Shelter in Place:** Stay indoors and monitor official broadcasts.
- **Sustainment:** Eat regularly and stay hydrated.
- **Safety:**
 - Practice fire safety (check smoke alarms, ventilation).
 - Dress in layers.
- **If Outdoors:**
 - Avoid overexertion.
 - Lift properly when shoveling.
 - Protect lungs from cold air.
 - Stay dry; change wet clothing immediately

- **Medical Awareness:** Watch for signs of:
 - **Frostbite:** Pale skin, loss of feeling.
 - **Hypothermia:** Shivering, confusion, slurred speech, drowsiness. *Seek immediate medical attention if suspected.*
- **Travel:** Avoid travel if possible. If necessary, travel during daylight on main roads.
- **Stranded Vehicle:**
 - Pull over, activate hazard lights.
 - Stay in the vehicle.
 - Run engine 10 mins/hour for warmth.
 - Exercise moderately.
 - Conserve battery power.
 - Signal for help ("HELP" or "SOS" in snow).

Post-Storm Recovery

- **Continue Monitoring:** Stay tuned to broadcasts for updates.
- **Flood Awareness:** Be aware of potential flooding.
- **Medical Attention:** Seek medical help if needed.
- **Cautious Travel:** Drive carefully – roads may be hazardous.
- **Reporting (Military/Government Personnel):** Once safe, report to your command and <https://adpaas.army.mil/>.

Where to Find Additional Information

- Federal Emergency Management Agency: <https://www.ready.gov/winter-weather>
- American Red Cross: <https://www.redcross.org/get-help/how-to-prepare-for-emergencies/types-of-emergencies/winter-storm.html>
- Ready Army: <https://www.army.mil/ready>

It's up to you. Prepare strong. Get an emergency supply kit with enough supplies for at least three days, make an emergency plan with your family and be informed about what might happen. These fact sheets are intended to supplement predetermined plans and policies. Follow state, local, installation and command guidance related to threats and hazards.



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