

WINTER WEATHER AND ICE STORM TIPS

Winter weather and especially ice storms cause several hazards. In addition to the risk of hazardous road and driving conditions, the primary concern during an ice storm is loss of power.

In the case of a power outage during an ice storm, utilize one of the following heat sources:

- Extra blankets, sleeping bags, and warm winter coats
- Fireplace with plenty of dry firewood or a gas log fireplace
- Portable space heaters or kerosene heaters

If you plan to use a wood stove, fireplace, or space heater, be extremely careful. Follow the manufacturer's instructions and remember these safety tips:

- Use fireplaces, wood stoves, or other combustion heaters only if they are properly vented to the outside.
- Ensure adequate ventilation if you must use a kerosene heater.
- Use only the type of fuel your heater is designed to use—don't substitute.
- Do not place a space heater within 3 feet of anything that may catch on fire, such as drapes, furniture, or bedding. Never cover your space heater.
- Never place a space heater on top of furniture or near water.
- Never leave children unattended near a space heater.
- Make sure that the cord of an electric space heater is not a tripping hazard but do not run the cord under carpets or rugs.
- Avoid using extension cords to plug in your space heater.
- If your space heater has a damaged electrical cord or produces sparks, do not use it.
- Store a multipurpose, dry-chemical fire extinguisher near the area to be heated.
- Protect yourself from carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning by installing a battery-operated CO detector and never using generators, grills, camp stoves, or similar devices inside the house, in basements, in garages, or near windows.

Have the following safety equipment:

- Chemical fire extinguisher
- Smoke alarm in working order (Check prior to winter storm season and change batteries, if needed.)
- Carbon monoxide detector (Check prior to winter storm season and change batteries, if needed.)

Use Generators Safely

- Never use an electric generator indoors, in the basement, inside the garage, or near open windows or the air intake of your house because of the risk of carbon monoxide poisoning.
- Plug in appliances to the generator using individual heavy-duty, outdoor-rated cords.
- Do not use the generator or appliances if they are wet because of the risk of electrocution.
- Do not store gasoline indoors where the fumes could ignite.

Light Your Home Safely

- Use battery-powered flashlights or lanterns.
- Avoid using candles as these can lead to house fires.
- If you do use candles, never leave lit candles alone.

Cook Safely

- Never use a charcoal or gas grill or portable camp stove indoors. The fumes are deadly.

Protect Your Water Source

- Leave all water taps slightly open so they drip continuously.
- Keep the indoor temperature warm.
- Improve the circulation of heated air near pipes. For example, open kitchen cabinet doors beneath the kitchen sink.

If your pipes do freeze, do not thaw them with a torch. Instead, thaw them slowly by directing the warm air from an electric hair dryer onto the pipes.

Conserve Heat

You may need fresh air coming in for your heater or for emergency cooking arrangements. However, if you don't need extra ventilation, keep as much heat as possible inside your home. Avoid unnecessarily opening doors or windows. Close off unneeded rooms, stuff towels or rags in cracks under doors, and close draperies or cover windows with blankets at night.

Monitor Body Temperature

Infants less than one year old should never sleep in a cold room because infants lose body heat more easily than adults; unlike adults, infants can't make enough body heat by shivering. Do not use blankets for babies. Instead, dress them in warmer clothing such as footed pajamas, one-piece wearable blankets, or sleep sacks. Provide warm clothing for infants and try to maintain a warm indoor temperature.

Older adults often make less body heat because of a slower metabolism and less physical activity. If you are over 65 years of age, check the temperature in your home often during extremely cold weather. Also, check on elderly friends and neighbors frequently to ensure their homes are adequately heated.

Protect Your Pets

- Bring pets inside.
- Provide adequate shelter for pets that must remain outside.
- Ensure pets and other animals have adequate unfrozen water.