



JANUARY, 2015

CHAMPAIGN FIRE DEPARTMENT ADVISES WINTER WEATHER SAFETY TIPS DURING EXTREME TEMPERATURES

Take these steps for your home

Many people prefer to remain indoors in the winter, but staying inside is no guarantee of safety. Take these steps to keep your home safe and warm during the winter months.

- Winterize your home.
 - Install weather stripping, insulation, and storm windows.
 - Insulate water lines that run along exterior walls.
 - Clean out gutters and repair roof leaks.
- Check your heating systems.
 - Have your heating system serviced professionally to make sure that it is clean, working properly and ventilated to the outside.
 - Inspect and clean fireplaces and chimneys.
 - Install a smoke detector. Test batteries monthly.
 - Have a safe alternate heating source and alternate fuels available.
 - Prevent carbon monoxide (CO) emergencies.

- Install a CO detector to alert you of the presence of the deadly, odorless, colorless gas. Check batteries regularly.
- Learn symptoms of CO poisoning: headaches, nausea, and disorientation.

Don't forget to prepare your car

Get your car ready for cold weather use before winter arrives.

- Service the radiator and maintain antifreeze level; check tire tread or, if necessary, replace tires with all-weather or snow tires.
 - Keep gas tank full to avoid ice in the tank and fuel lines.
 - Use a wintertime formula in your windshield washer.
 - Prepare a winter emergency kit to keep in your car in case you become stranded.
Include:
 - blankets;
 - food and water;
 - booster cables, flares, tire pump, and a bag of sand or cat litter (for traction);
 - compass and maps;
 - flashlight, battery-powered radio, and extra batteries;
 - first-aid kit; and

Equip in advance for emergencies

Be prepared for weather-related emergencies, including power outages.

- Stock food that needs no cooking or refrigeration and water stored in clean containers.
- Ensure that your cell phone is fully charged.
- When planning travel, be aware of current and forecast weather conditions.
- Keep an up-to-date emergency kit, including:
 - Battery-operated devices, such as a flashlight, a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Weather Radio, and lamps;
 - extra batteries;
 - first-aid kit and extra medicine;
 - baby items; and
 - cat litter or sand for icy walkways.

Take these precautions outdoors

Many people spend time outdoors in the winter working, traveling, or enjoying winter sports. Outdoor activities can expose you to several safety hazards, but you can take these steps to prepare for them:

- Wear appropriate outdoor clothing: layers of light, warm clothing; mittens; hats; scarves; and waterproof boots.
- Sprinkle cat litter or sand on icy patches.
- Learn safety precautions to follow when outdoors.
 - Be aware of the wind chill factor.
 - Work slowly when doing outside chores.
 - Take a buddy and an emergency kit when you are participating in outdoor recreation.
 - Carry a cell phone.
- Protect your family from carbon monoxide.
 - Keep grills, camp stoves, and generators out of the house, basement and garage.
 - Locate generators at least 20 feet from the house.
 - Leave your home immediately if the CO detector sounds, and call 911.

Traveling

When planning travel, be aware of current and forecast weather conditions.

- Avoid traveling when the weather service has issued advisories.
- If you must travel, inform a friend or relative of your proposed route and expected time of arrival.
- Follow these safety rules if you become stranded in your car.
 - Stay with your car unless safety is no more than 100 yards away, but continue to move arms and legs.
 - Stay visible by putting bright cloth on the antenna, turning on the inside overhead light (when engine is running), and raising the hood when snow stops falling.
 - Run the engine and heater only 10 minutes every hour.
 - Keep a downwind window open.
 - Make sure the tailpipe is not blocked.

Above all, be prepared to check on family and neighbors who are especially at risk from cold weather hazards: young children, older adults, and the chronically ill. If you have pets, bring them inside. If you cannot bring them inside, provide adequate, warm shelter and unfrozen water to drink.