

HOME SAFETY

Many people prefer to stay indoors during the winter months, but even inside, safety is not guaranteed. Listen to weather forecasts regularly and take steps to prepare your home for cold weather, winter storms and power outages.

Prepare before a storm

Sign up for local alerts and warning systems.

Store water in clean containers.

Fully charge your cell phone.

Make an emergency supply kit. You should have enough supplies to sustain yourself, your family and your pets for at least 3 days.

Stock food that needs no cooking or refrigeration.

Talk to your medical provider about a power outage plan for medical devices powered by electricity (such as oxygen concentrators) and refrigerated medicines. Find out how long medication can be stored at higher temperatures.

Weatherproof your home.

Act during a storm

Monitor the weather reports.

Turn off or disconnect unneeded appliances, equipment, or electronics. Keep freezers and refrigerators closed.

Check on family and neighbors who may be at a higher risk from cold weather hazards (especially young children and older adults).

If you have pets, bring them inside. If you cannot bring them inside, provide adequate, warm shelter and unfrozen water to drink.

Throw away any food that has been exposed to temperatures 40°F or higher for 2 hours or more, or that has an unusual odor, texture, or color. Never taste foods to decide if they are safe.

When in doubt, throw it out!

If the power has been out for less than 4 hours, eat food in the order it will spoil:

1. Eat the food in the refrigerator.
2. Eat food from the freezer.
3. Start eating food from your emergency supply.

For more information visit

www.ready.gov/winter-weather.



Emergency Supply Kit (for 3 days):



Flashlight



Water
3 gallons
per person



Manual
can opener



Blankets



Warm clothes



Food



Backpack



Batteries



Cell phone



Hygiene items



Medications



Radio



First aid kit

Weather terms to know

A WATCH means that there is a high possibility that a weather emergency will occur. When a severe storm watch is issued for your area, continue to listen to the radio or television for updates and pay attention to visible weather changes around you.

A WARNING means that a weather emergency is already happening, or will happen soon. When you hear a warning, take immediate action.

“Shelter-in-place” means to take immediate shelter where you are—at home, work, school, or in between.

Carbon monoxide (CO)

Often called the “invisible killer,” CO is an **odorless, colorless gas** created when fuels (such as gasoline, wood, coal, natural gas, propane, oil, and methane) burn incompletely. In the home, heating and cooking equipment that burn fuel are also potential sources of CO. During and after a snowstorm, make sure vents for the dryer, furnace, stove, and fireplace are clear of snow build-up.

Vehicles or generators running in an attached garage can also produce dangerous levels of CO. **Do not run a vehicle or other fueled engine or motor indoors**, even if garage doors are open. If you need to warm a vehicle, remove it from the garage immediately after starting it. Make sure the exhaust pipe of a running vehicle is not covered with snow.

CO poisoning can cause serious health issues and even result in death. Symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning include **headache, dizziness, weakness, upset stomach, vomiting, chest pain, and confusion.**

Smoke and CO alarms

Smoke and CO alarms that are properly installed and maintained play a vital role in reducing deaths and injuries. However, it is important to know that **many children will not wake when an alarm sounds.** Be sure your family has a plan in place.

Smoke alarms should be installed on every level of the house and in every bedroom, outside all sleeping areas, in a family room or den and at the bottom of each staircase. They should be mounted on a ceiling or high on the wall.

CO alarms should be installed in a central location outside each sleeping area and on every level of the home and in other locations where required by applicable laws, codes or standards.

For added protection, interconnect all smoke and CO alarms. When one alarm sounds they all sound. Interconnection can be done using hard-wiring or wireless technology.

Test batteries in alarms monthly and replace batteries every 6 months.

Replace alarms according to manufacturers' recommendations. This is generally at least every 10 years.



Heat your home safely

If you'll be using a fireplace, wood stove, or kerosene heater, **install smoke and CO detectors near the area to be heated.** Vent all fuel-burning equipment outside. Use only the type of fuel designed for your heater. Do not store gasoline indoors—the fumes could ignite.

Space heaters should never be placed within **3 feet** of anything that may catch on fire (e.g., curtains, furniture, or bedding), on top of furniture, or near water. Never cover your space heater or leave children unattended near it. Do not use your space heater if it has a damaged electrical cord or produces sparks. Never use your stove or oven as a heating source.

If using a generator, camp stove or grill, make sure it is located outside and **at least 20 feet from your home.** A generator should also not be located anywhere it could be reached by snow or rain—**do not use a generator if it is wet!** Use a single, heavy-duty, outdoor-rated extension cord to plug into your generator.

For more information visit www.nfpa.org.



If the CO or smoke alarm sounds, leave your home immediately and call 9-1-1. Do not re-enter your home until emergency responders have told you it is safe.