

Winter Weather Toolkit

The Federal Emergency Management Agency ([FEMA](#)), the [Ready Campaign](#), and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration ([NOAA](#)) are promoting [winter weather preparedness](#) this December and encouraging the [Whole Community](#) to take action.

Every year we see how winter weather can impact our region. Heavy snowfall and extreme cold can bring things to a halt. Winter weather can knock out heat, power, and communication services to your home, office and city. But winter weather isn't just blizzards and heavy snowfall – it's freezing rain, high winds, hail and other conditions too. Exposure to the cold, dangerous conditions on roads, and improper use of heaters are all concerns during winter months. It is important to be prepared for winter weather before it strikes to decrease your risk.

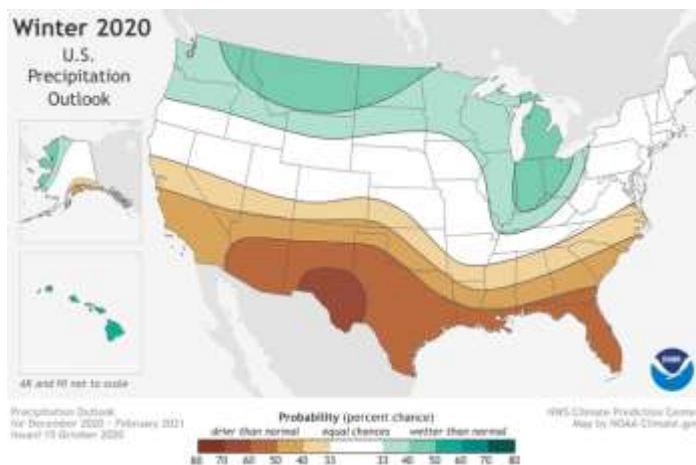
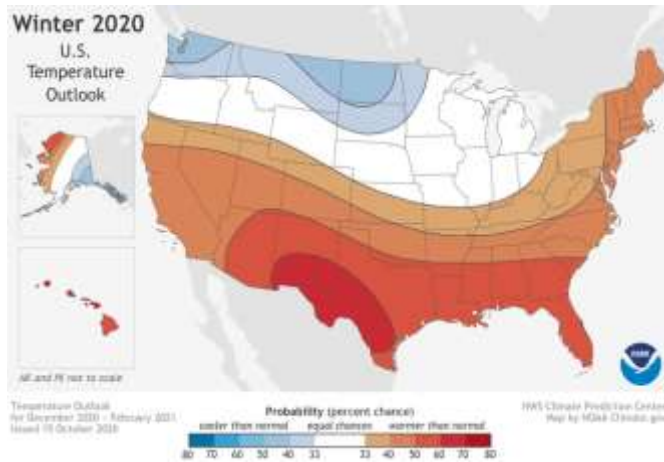
In addition to asking Americans to promote winter weather preparedness through their own outreach channels, [FEMA Region 3](#) is encouraging everyone to get the word out and help the Whole Community prepare for winter. This toolkit is designed to provide you and your organization with easy to use tools to promote this campaign and help you to support your own stakeholders to take action against [winter weather](#).

FEMA Region 3 Points of Contact

Public Affairs	Gabe Lugo	202-304-0398
Congressional Affairs	Nicholas Morici	267-546-6419
Social Media & Digital Communications	Amanda Hancher	215-459-3637
Intergovernmental Affairs	David Thomason	215-931-5706
Private Sector	Melissa Wiehenstroer	202-568-4391
Volunteer Agency Liaison	Amy Eden	202-710-6297
Community Preparedness Officer	Vacant	
Regional Preparedness Liaison	John Dispaldo	610-930-6869
Disability Integration	PJ Mattiacci	267-270-5804 (text only)

Winter Weather

2020-2021 Winter Weather Forecast



Key Messages for Winter Weather

- [Winter weather](#) can occur anywhere and can include freezing rain, ice, snow, high winds or a combination of all these conditions.
- Winter weather can cause power outages that last for days or weeks, making it hard to keep warm, taking out communication networks, and making travel very dangerous. Heavy snowfall and extreme cold can immobilize an entire region.
- Winter storms can range from moderate snow over a few hours to a blizzard with blinding, wind-driven snow that lasts for several days. Many winter storms are accompanied by dangerously low temperatures and sometimes by strong winds, icing, sleet and freezing rain.
- Winter storms can be deadly. Many deaths can be indirectly linked to them, such as from exposure to the cold, traffic accidents on icy roads, etc.

- It's important to be prepared for winter weather, from stocking your kit with extra food and water to having a family plan. If you'll be traveling during the winter or for the holidays, it's important to plan your travel with winter weather considerations in mind.

Talking Points for Winter Weather

Preparing for Winter Weather

- With winter approaching, be sure to look through your emergency kit and add supplies specific to winter, such as:
 - Rock salt or more environmentally safe products to melt ice on walkways. (Remember that these products can be harmful to dogs, so be sure to choose a non-toxic brand if you or your neighbors have pets.)
 - Sand/gravel to improve traction.
 - Snow shovels or other snow removal equipment.
 - Heating fuel. If you have a fireplace or wood-burning stove, keep a supply of good, dry wood for heating in case you lose power.
 - Adequate clothing and blankets to keep warm, including coats, sweaters, hats, gloves, mittens, scarves, etc.
 - Keep your [NOAA Weather Radio](#) in your kit to receive broadcast alerts and warnings directly from the NWS for all hazards. You may also sign up in advance to receive notifications from your local emergency services.
- Make a [Family Communications Plan](#). Your family may not be together when disaster strikes, so it is important to know how you will contact one another, how you will get back together, and what you will do in case of an emergency.
- Before the storm hits, download free smartphone apps, such as those available from [FEMA](#) and the [American Red Cross](#), which provide information about finding shelters, providing first aid and seeking assistance for recovery.
- Be prepared to bring your pets/animals inside in the event of a winter storm. Move animals and livestock to a sheltered area with non-frozen drinking water.

Plan Your Travel during Winter Weather Carefully

- During a winter storm, minimize your travel by car. Even if winter weather conditions aren't obviously present, conditions like black ice can cause vehicles to lose control.
- If you plan on traveling by vehicle during the winter, make sure to winterize your vehicle. Check (or have a mechanic check) the following items in your car:
 - Ensure that antifreeze levels are sufficient to avoid freezing.
 - Ensure your battery and ignition are in top condition and battery terminals are

- clean.
 - Check for wear and fluid levels of breaks.
 - Check for leaks and crimped pipes in your exhaust system, and repair/replace as necessary. Carbon monoxide is deadly and usually there is no warning of its presence.
 - Fuel and air filters - replace and keep water out of the system by using additives and maintaining a full tank of gas. A full tank will keep the fuel line from freezing.
 - Ensure your heater and defroster are working properly.
 - Check your lights and hazard lights to ensure they're working properly.
 - Check your oil level and weight. Heavier oils can congeal more at low temperatures and do not lubricate as well.
 - Repair any problems with your windshield wipers and maintain proper washer fluid levels.
 - Install good winter tires with adequate tread. Remember that some jurisdictions may require vehicles be equipped with chains or snow tires with studs.
- Keep a winter weather supply kit in your vehicle, including:
 - Shovel
 - Windshield scraper and small broom
 - Flashlight
 - Battery-powered radio
 - Extra batteries
 - Water
 - Food
 - Matches
 - Extra clothing and blankets to keep warm, such as coats, hats, socks, mittens, etc.
 - First aid kit
 - Medications
 - Tow chain or rope
 - Jumper cables
 - Road salt and sand
 - Emergency flares
 - Fluorescent distress flag
- If you're traveling overseas, remember to enroll in the [U.S. Department of State's Smart Traveler Enrollment Program \(STEP\)](#) to receive important information from the embassy about safety conditions in your destination country, helping you make informed decisions about your travel plans.
 - By enrolling, the U.S. Embassy can contact you in an emergency, whether a natural disaster, civil unrest or family emergency.
 - Take a look at the [U.S. Department of State's Traveler's Checklist](#) too, where you can get helpful tips about safety and security, crisis planning, health precautions and money matters.

Be Informed

- Know the below terms and what actions to take. Be alert to weather reports and tune in for specific guidance when these conditions develop.
 - Freezing Rain: Rain that freezes when it hits the ground, creating a coating of ice on roads, walkways, trees and power lines.
 - Sleet: Rain that turns to ice pellets before reaching the ground. Sleet also causes moisture on roads to freeze and become slippery.
 - Wind Chill: Wind chill is the temperature it “feels like” when you are outside. The NWS provides a [wind chill calculator](#) to show the difference between air temperature and the perceived temperature and the amount of time until frostbite occurs.
 - Winter Weather Advisory: The NWS issues a winter weather advisory when conditions are expected to cause significant inconveniences that may be hazardous. If caution is used, these situations should not be life-threatening.
 - Winter Storm Watch: A winter storm is possible in your area. The NWS issues a winter storm watch when severe winter conditions, such as heavy snow and/or ice, may affect your area but the location and timing are still uncertain.
 - A winter storm watch is issued 12 to 36 hours in advance of a potential severe storm. Tune in to your NOAA Weather Radio, local radio, TV, or other news sources for more information.
 - Monitor alerts, check your emergency supplies, and gather any items you may need if you lose power.
 - Winter Storm Warning: A winter storm is occurring or will soon occur in your area.
 - Blizzard Warning: Sustained winds or frequent gusts to 35 miles per hour or greater and considerable amounts of falling or blowing snow (reducing visibility to less than a quarter mile) are expected to prevail for a period of three hours or longer.
 - Frost/Freeze Warning: Below freezing temperatures are expected.

Carbon Monoxide

- Carbon monoxide-related deaths are highest during colder months and are likely due to increased use of gas-powered furnaces and alternative heating, cooking, and power sources used inappropriately indoors during power outages.
- Never use a generator, grill, camp stove or other gasoline, propane, natural gas or charcoal-burning devices inside a home, garage, basement, crawlspace or any partially enclosed area. Locate unit away from doors, windows and vents that could allow carbon monoxide to come indoors. Keep these devices at least 20 feet from doors, windows and vents.
- The primary hazards to avoid when using alternate sources for electricity, heating, or cooking are carbon monoxide poisoning, electric shock and fires.

- Install carbon monoxide alarms in central locations on every level of your home and outside sleeping areas to provide early warning of accumulating carbon monoxide.
- If the carbon monoxide alarm sounds, move quickly to a fresh air location outdoors or by an open window or door.
- Call for help from the fresh air location and remain there until emergency personnel arrive to assist you.

Winterize your home

- Winterize your home to extend the life of your fuel supply by insulating walls and attics, caulking and weather-stripping doors and windows, and installing storm windows or covering windows with plastic.
- Winterize your house, barn, shed or any other structure that may provide shelter for your family, neighbors, livestock or equipment. Clear rain gutters, repair roof leaks and cut away tree branches that could fall on a house or other structure during a storm.
- Maintain heating equipment and chimneys by having them cleaned and inspected every year.
- Insulate pipes with insulation or newspapers and plastic and allow faucets to drip a little during cold weather to avoid freezing. Running water, even at a trickle, helps prevent pipes from freezing.
- All fuel-burning equipment should be vented to the outside and kept clear.
- Keep fire extinguishers on hand, and make sure everyone in your house knows how to use them. House fires pose an additional risk during the winter, as more people turn to alternate heating sources without taking the necessary safety precautions.
- Learn how to shut off water valves (in case a pipe bursts).

Hire a contractor to check the structural ability of the roof to sustain unusually heavy weight from the accumulation of snow or water, if drains on flat roofs do not work.

Press Release Template

<ORGANIZATION> Encourages Winter Weather Preparedness

<CITY, St.> – <INSERT ORGANIZATION> is promoting winter preparedness and encouraging their <Employees or Residents> to take action to prepare for winter weather.

<INSERT ORGANIZATION> is <INSERT EVENT INFORMATION HERE> OR <committed to supporting winter preparedness>.

Winter storms can occur anywhere and bring freezing rain, ice, snow, high winds or a combination of all these conditions. Winter weather can knock out heat, power, and communications services to your home or office, sometimes for days at a time. Heavy snowfall and extreme cold can immobilize an entire region. Being prepared for winter weather can decrease your risk.

The [Whole Community](#) can take action against winter weather this season by:

- Winterizing your [Emergency Supply Kit](#);
- Planning how to communicate with family and friends with an [Emergency Communication Plan](#);
- And knowing how to receive important weather information and updates, including signing-up for local community [alerts](#).

<QUOTE FROM LEADERSHIP TO SUPPORT CAMPAIGN>

More information regarding winter weather planning can be found at <INSERT ORGANIZATION WEBSITE or [Ready.gov](#) or [Listo.gov](#) (in Spanish).>

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Online Resources

More information about winter weather preparedness can be found through the following links:

- [Ready.gov](#)
- [Ready.gov Winter Weather](#)
- [Ready.gov News](#)
- FEMA Videos
 - [“When the Sky Turns Gray”](#)
 - [“Preparing for Winter Travel”](#)
 - [“Be Prepared for Emergencies While Traveling”](#)
- [Weather.gov](#)
- [Weather Terms](#)

- [CDC Winter Weather](#)
- [American Red Cross Winter Weather Resources](#)
- [Department of Health and Human Services Winter Weather Resources](#)
- [U.S. Fire Administration Winter Fire Safety](#)

Social Media, Images, & Graphics

Social media, photos, and graphics for Critical Infrastructure

Below are sample messages that you can post on your own social media accounts to engage your friends/followers and promote whole community preparedness. More information and ideas on how to take action and be an example can be found on FEMA's official [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) or [Instagram](#) accounts, Ready.gov's official [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#) accounts, NOAA's official [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#) accounts, National Weather Service's official [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) accounts, or FEMA Region 3's [Twitter](#) account.

Twitter

- Layer up this winter! Protect yourself from COVID-19 and cold weather with the right gear for the season, including jacket, hat, mask, and gloves.
- Although winter comes as no surprise, many of us may not be ready for its arrival. Stay safe and healthy when temperatures start to fall by preparing indoors & outdoors. Learn more - <http://go.usa.gov/7Jp4>
- Before winter approaches, update your Emergency Supply Kit so you're ready for colder weather. [If you are able to, set aside extra soap, hand sanitizer, and disinfectants. http://www.ready.gov/make-a-plan](http://www.ready.gov/make-a-plan)
- #DYK Do you know the signs of hypothermia? weather.gov/cold #WinterSafety
- Nor'easters impact millions in the eastern U.S. with heavy snow and strong winds. Are you prepared? <http://go.usa.gov/7Jp4> #WinterSafety
- Prepare for winter storms and cold weather with the kids by playing the disaster master game: www.ready.gov/kids/games Password hint: SLEET
- Snow Prep tips: check on neighbors, charge cell phones, find flashlights (check batteries) and follow local officials online. #WinterSafety
- Winter storms make it hard to keep warm and make travel very dangerous. Plan ahead now! #BeReady #PreparedNotScared <http://go.usa.gov/7Jp4>
- [It's cold out! Plan ahead. If you need to stay in a public space to get out of the cold, follow @CDC guidance to be safe from COVID-19: wear a mask and practice social distancing. #WinterSafety #COVIDStopsWithMe https://www.ready.gov/winter-weather](https://www.ready.gov/winter-weather)

- This winter, look out for friends and neighbors. Stay safe - washing your hands, staying 6 feet apart, and wearing a mask. Learn how you and your friends can protect each other: <https://bit.ly/HowToWearMasks> #MaskingForAFriend #WinterSafety
- Check on neighbors to make sure they are prepared for winter while maintaining social distancing. Consider connecting by telephone, e-mail, text messages, video chat, and social media. #WinterSafety #PreparedNotScared
- Heavy snowfall and extreme cold can immobilize an entire region. Prepare ahead and often. #BeReady #PreparedNotScared <http://www.ready.gov/make-a-plan>
- Follow these 3 steps to save a life during cold weather: weather.gov/cold #WinterSafety #BeReady #PreparedNotScared
- You may become isolated in your home and regular fuel sources may be cut off. Plan a secondary heating source. <http://www.ready.gov/make-a-plan>
- Bundling up in layers & staying dry is one of the best things you can do to stay safe this winter. weather.gov/cold #WinterSafety
- Stay warm and #MaskUp today! Be sure to have several clean masks to use in case yours becomes wet or damp from snow. Cloth masks should not be worn when they become damp or wet. #WinterSafety <https://go.usa.gov/x7U9K>
- Being prepared allows you to avoid extra trips out and address minor issues at home. Consider adding cold medicine, masks, disinfectants, winter clothing & blankets to your kit. #BeReady #PreparedNotScared <http://go.usa.gov/7Jp4>
- Your family may not be together when a storm strikes, consider making a family communication plan. #BeReady #PreparedNotScared <http://go.usa.gov/7JHx>
- Conditions can change fast & become dangerous during winter. Consider signing up for alerts to stay informed. #BeReady #PreparedNotScared <http://go.usa.gov/7J6z>
- Winterize your vehicle to stay safe when driving this winter. Check or have a mechanic look out for these: <http://go.usa.gov/7J6z>.
- “When the Sky Turns Gray” #BeReady! Watch the animation to learn what you can do today! https://youtu.be/XVpGJ_Xl_w
- During winter months, falling snow serves as an important source of fresh water. <http://www.srh.noaa.gov/jetstream/atmos/hydro.html> #WinterScience
- Arctic air, together with brisk winds, can lead to dangerously cold wind chill values. <http://www.nws.noaa.gov/om/cold/> #WinterScience
- You love your pets, so keep them warm, dry and well-fed this winter. #loveyourpets www.ready.gov/pets #WinterSafety

- Check out avalanche safety tips before you hit the slopes at weather.gov/avalanche #WinterSafety
- Protect workers & your business when winter weather hits. @OSHA #Preparedness & Response materials can get you started:
<http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/emergencypreparedness/gettingstarted.html>

Facebook

- #WinterStorms can occur anywhere and bring freezing rain, ice, snow and high winds. Prepare now by winterizing your Emergency Supply Kit and making a Family Communication Plan!
<http://go.usa.gov/7Jp4>
- Winter storms make it hard to keep warm and make travel very dangerous. Plan alternative ways to heat your home if the power is out and make plans to decrease your travel to avoid bad weather!
<http://go.usa.gov/7Jp4>
- Heavy snowfall and extreme cold can immobilize an entire region. #BeReady for Winter Weather, learn how > <http://www.ready.gov/make-a-plan>
- Before winter approaches, update your Emergency Supply Kit so you're ready for colder weather with masks, disinfectants, blankets, warm clothing, shovel and other winter supplies.
<http://www.ready.gov/winter-weather>
- Winterize your home to extend the life of your fuel supply by insulating walls and attics, caulking and weather-stripping doors and windows, and installing storm windows or covering windows with plastic. <http://www.ready.gov/winter-weather>
- Winterize your house, barn, shed or any other structure that may provide shelter for your family, neighbors, livestock or equipment. Clear rain gutters; repair roof leaks and cut away tree branches that could fall on a house or other structure during a storm. <http://www.ready.gov/winter-weather>
- Insulate pipes with insulation or newspapers and plastic and allow faucets to drip a little during cold weather to avoid freezing. Running water, even at a trickle, helps prevent pipes from freezing.
<http://www.ready.gov/winter-weather>
- Keep fire extinguishers on hand, and make sure everyone in the building knows how to use them. House fires pose an added risk, as many turn to alternate heating sources without safety precautions. <http://www.ready.gov/winter-weather>
- You may become isolated in your home and regular fuel sources may be cut off. Plan a secondary heating source. <http://www.ready.gov/winter-weather>
- Your family may not be together when a storm strikes, consider making a family communication plan. Know how you will communicate and stay in touch.
<http://go.usa.gov/7JHx>
- Conditions can change fast and become dangerous during winter. Consider signing up for alerts to

stay informed. <http://go.usa.gov/7J6z>

- Winterize your vehicle to stay safe when driving this winter. Check or have a mechanic check out these items: <https://www.ready.gov/car>
- Know the terms used to describe changing winter weather conditions and what protective actions you should take to stay safe. https://community.fema.gov/hazard/winter-storm-en-us/be-smart?lang=en_US
- “When the Sky Turns Gray” it is time to get prepared! Watch the animation to learn what actions you can take today! https://youtu.be/XVpGJ_Xl_____w
- Before you hit the slopes, make sure check out www.avalanche.org for current and forecast snow conditions. Find avalanche safety tips at weather.gov/avalanche
- Protect workers & your business when winter weather hits. OSHA can get you started: www.osha.gov/SLTC/emergencypreparedness/gettingstarted.html
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Don't forget to wipe your dog's paws! Ice-melting chemicals can make your pet sick.

#BeInformed



Help firefighters by keeping hydrants clear.

#BeInformed





Always keep gas generators away from homes & garages.

#BeInformed



Slow down and if possible, stay off the roads during and after a storm.

#BeInformed



Indoor Winter Safety

Check your smoke/carbon monoxide (CO) detectors. The danger of CO poisoning is greater during winter storms when doors and windows stay closed and fireplaces and gas heaters are in use. You can also be exposed to deadly CO levels when "warming up" your car in the garage or when snow covers your tail pipe.



weather.gov



Winter Weather Tips

KNOW WINTER WEATHER TERMS

- Watch = winter storm is possible in your area. Follow local officials and media for tips and updates.
- Advisory = conditions expected to cause major delays and may be hazardous. Use caution.
- Warning = winter storm is occurring or will occur soon in your area.

WINTER STORM TIPS

- Prepare for possible power loss: add warm clothes to emergency kit, check flashlight and radio batteries, charge mobile devices, fill car tank, take cash out (ATM's may not work).
- Only use generators in open areas away from windows and home to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning.
- Bring pets/animals inside and move livestock to sheltered areas with non-frozen drinking water.

