Winter Storm Preparedness

Winter storms can quickly become life-threatening and cause serious hazards. Storms can last several days and have the potential to interrupt power and communication services. Learn what to do to keep yourself and your loved ones safe.

BEFORE A WINTER STORM

Protect Your Family

Make sure you have access to weather reports and warnings. Listen for emergency information and alerts from sources like the Emergency Alert System (EAS) and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

Be prepared for winter weather at home. Gather supplies in case you need to stay home for several days.

Protect Your Family

• Have supplies of food, water, necessary medications, flashlights, cell phone charging options, extra batteries and first aid kit.
• Keep in mind each person’s specific needs and the needs of your pets.
• Consider having a generator on-site with fuel to maintain electricity during power outages.

Protect Your Home

• Install and test smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors with battery backups.
• Consider having tree branches that overhang your home removed as the weight of ice and snow could cause them to fall.

• If you’ll be away during subfreezing weather, keep your thermostat set above 55° F.
• For exterior walls with plumbing, keep cabinet doors open for heat circulation.
• Disconnect garden hoses from exterior faucets to prevent water from freezing in the hose and rupturing the faucet.
• Check water flow periodically; if there is a pressure drop, it might be a signal pipes are beginning to freeze.
• Leave faucets slightly open to keep the water flowing and relieve pressure.
• Make sure you know the location of the main water cut-off valve so you can turn off the water quickly (if needed).
• Keep insurance policies, documents and other valuables in a safe-deposit box — you may need quick access to them.
• Take a few minutes to document the contents of your home (digital pictures or video) to create a room by room inventory list.
DURING A WINTER STORM

• Continue listening to local area radio, NOAA radio or TV stations for the latest information and updates.

• Despite your preparation, you may still have to deal with frozen pipes. If they freeze, leave the affected faucets open and turn off the water supply.

• If a pipe rupture is near electrical fittings or cables, turn off power in that area.

AFTER A WINTER STORM

• Inspect your home’s structure, utilities and system.

• If safe, make temporary and emergency repairs as needed.

• Take pictures of home damage, both of the exterior buildings and its contents, for insurance purposes.

• Keep all receipts for out-of-pocket expenses.

• Continue listening to local news or NOAA Weather Radio for updated information and instructions.

Notify NFP if you expect to file a claim.

NFP cannot guarantee that all information here will be applicable to every situation. While we use reasonable efforts to ensure accuracy, your situation may require different actions and this article is not a complete list of all possible risk management strategies. We assume no responsibility or liability from an action or inaction taken as a result of this content.

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