

## **Tips for Winter Storms: You Might Find Some New Ideas Here or Good Reminders**

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United Way of Connecticut has these [tips for handling winter snow storms](#). You know many of them, but you may pick up some ideas or reminders from this (which was last updated in December):

### **Before the Storm Strikes:**

Winter storms and blizzards can cause loss of electricity, heat and telephone service and can trap you in your home for a few days. Have available:

- Flashlight and extra batteries
- Make sure each member of your household has a warm coat, gloves or mittens, hat and water resistant boots
- Extra blankets
- Battery powered NOAA Weather Radio and portable radio to receive emergency information

- Canned food and nonelectric can opener
- Bottled water
- Extra medicine and baby items
- First aid supplies
- Heating fuel – fuel carriers may not reach you for days after a severe winter storm
- Back up heating source, such as fireplace, wood stove, space heater, etc.
- Snow shovels and other snow removal equipment
- Sand to improve traction
- Bring pets/companion animals inside during winter weather. Move other animals or livestock to sheltered areas with non-frozen drinking water
- Make a Family Communication Plan. Your family may not be together when the storm strikes, so it is important to know how you will contact one another and how you will get back together.

### **During the Winter Storm:**

- Stay indoors
- If you must go outside, several layers of clothing will keep you warmer than a single heavy coat. Gloves or mittens and a hat will prevent loss of body heat. Cover your mouth to protect your lungs.
- Keep dry. Change wet clothing frequently to prevent a loss of body heat.
- Watch for signs of frostbite. These include loss of feeling and white or pale appearance in extremities such as fingers, toes, ear lobes, and the tip of the nose. If symptoms are detected get medical help immediately.
- Watch for signs of hypothermia. These include uncontrollable shivering, memory loss, disorientation, incoherence, slurred speech, drowsiness, and apparent exhaustion. If symptoms are detected get the victim to a warm location, remove wet clothing, warm the center of the body first and give warm, non-alcoholic beverages if the victim is conscious. Get medical help as soon as possible.
- Walk carefully on snowy, icy sidewalks
- Drive only if it absolutely necessary. If you must drive travel in the day, don't travel alone; keep others informed of your schedule; stay on main roads and avoid back road shortcuts
- Conserve fuel, if necessary, by keeping your house cooler than normal. Temporarily shut off heat to less-used rooms.
- When using alternative heat from a fire place, wood stove, or space heater, use fire safeguards and properly ventilate
- If using kerosene heaters, maintain ventilation to avoid buildup of toxic fumes. Keep heaters at least three feet from flammable objects. Refuel kerosene heaters outside.

### **If You Must Travel by Car in a Storm:**

- Have emergency supplies in the trunk. Include blankets/sleeping bags, flashlight with extra batteries, extra set of dry clothing and boots, shovel, sand, tire chains, jumper cables, high calorie non-perishable food, windshield scraper, first aid kit, compass, road maps, and a brightly colored cloth to tie to the antenna.

- Keep your car's gas tank full for emergency use and to keep the fuel line from freezing
- Let someone know your destination, your route, and when you expect to arrive

**If You Do Get Stuck:**

- Stay with your car. Do not try to walk to safety.
- Tie a brightly colored cloth (preferably red) to the antenna for rescuers to see
- Raise the hood indicating trouble after snow stops falling
- Start the car and use the heater for about 10 minutes every hour. Keep the exhaust pipe clear so fumes won't back up into the car.
- Leave the overhead light on when the engine is running so that you can be seen
- As you sit, keep moving your arms, legs, fingers and toes to keep blood circulating and to keep warm
- Keep one window away from the blowing wind slightly open to let in air

**After the Storm Has Passed:**

- If you shovel be extremely careful. Pace yourself and rest frequently, don't overexert. Shoveling causes many heart attacks, especially in very cold temperatures.
- Look for any damage that may have occurred to your home and make sure water pipes are functioning.
- Check on neighbors to see if they need help.

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*SOURCES:* [American Red Cross](#), [American Public Health Association](#), [FEMA's](#), [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov)