



**PRESS RELEASE
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WINTER WEATHER RESOURCE GUIDE

Kershaw County, SC – In an effort to inform and educate South Carolinians on what to do before, during, and after a winter storm, The South Carolina Emergency Management Division and the State Emergency Response Team provides the following Winter Weather Resource Guide below:

WINTER WEATHER: KNOW THE TERMS

- **Winter Storm Watch:** A winter storm is possible in your area.
- **Winter Storm Warning:** A winter storm is occurring or will soon occur in your area.
- **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 into ice pellets before reaching the ground. Sleet also causes moisture on roads to freeze and become slippery.
- **Frost/Freeze Warning:** Below-freezing temperatures are expected.
- **Black Ice:** Sometimes called clear ice, refers to a thin coating of glazed ice on a surface that is a virtually invisible hazard to motorists.

BEFORE A WINTER STORM

- Add winter supplies like rock salt and shovels to your disaster supplies kit.
- Prepare for possible isolation in your home by having sufficient heating fuel; regular fuel sources may be cut off.
- Insulate your pipes with insulation or newspapers and plastic and allow faucets to drip a little during cold weather to avoid freezing.
- Learn how to shut off water valves in case a pipe bursts.
- Have your vehicle serviced to ensure it is prepared for the winter season.

- Place a winter emergency kit in every vehicle that includes: a shovel; windshield scraper and small broom; flashlight; battery-powered radio; extra batteries; water; snack food; matches; extra hats, socks, and mittens; first aid kit with pocket knife; necessary medications; blankets; tow chain or rope; road salt and sand; booster cables; emergency flares; fluorescent distress flag.

DURING A WINTER STORM

- Stay indoors. If you must go outside, dress in layers of loose fitting, lightweight clothing. Wear a hat that covers your ears. Wear mittens and cover your mouth with a scarf to protect your lungs. Wear waterproof, insulated boot to keep your feet warm and dry and to maintain your footing in ice and snow.
- Avoid overexertion when shoveling snow. Overexertion can bring on a heart attack – a major cause of death in the winter. If you must shovel snow, stretch before going outside.
- Keep dry. Change wet clothing frequently to prevent a loss of body heat. Wet clothing loses all of its insulating value and transmits heat rapidly.
- Watch for signs of frostbite such as the loss of feeling and white or pale appearance in extremities such as fingers, toes, ear lobes, and the tip of your nose.
- Drive only if it is absolutely necessary. If you must drive, travel in the day, don't travel alone and keep others informed of your schedule. Decrease your speed and leave plenty of room to stop the vehicle on icy roads.
- If trapped in your car during a blizzard, pull off of the highway and turn on your hazard lights. Remain in your vehicle where rescuers are most likely to find you. Run the engine and heater about 10 minutes each hour to keep warm. When the engine is running, open a downwind window slightly for ventilation and periodically clear snow from the exhaust pipe. This will protect you from possible carbon monoxide poisoning.
- Exercise to maintain body heat, but avoid overexertion. Drink fluids to avoid dehydration.
- Avoid fallen power lines. Ice storms can create a buildup of ice on power lines and on trees. The weight of the ice can cause tree limbs and even entire trees to fall onto power lines, breaking them. Treat all utility lines that have fallen on the ground as energized and very dangerous.

AFTER THE STORM

- Listen to your local radio or television station for the latest weather and traffic reports.
- Go to a designated shelter if your home loses power or heat during periods of extreme cold.

- Check on your animals and ensure that their access to food and water is not blocked by snow drifts, ice, or other obstacles. Shelter them indoors, if possible.
- Be aware of possible carbon monoxide poisoning, electric shock, and fire if using alternative sources for electricity, heating, or cooking.

DELAYS/CLOSINGS

- County and State government offices will follow the same winter weather delay/closure decisions. Monitor local media for information regarding all other winter weather closing such as K-12 schools, municipal government and businesses.
- Prior to the onset of winter each year, organizations should develop a list of employees who may be needed during a severe winter storm. Supervisors should communicate internal inclement weather procedures and options (equipment, transportation, telecommuting, etc.) through annual winter-weather training opportunities.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- During the cold winter months, local fire departments see an increase in the number of heating-related fires and fatalities due to carbon monoxide poisoning. If you lose electricity, know how to report the outage to your power utility and use extra caution when using open flames such as fireplaces and candles. Never use a portable generator indoors or without reading the instructions first. Never burn charcoal indoors. Do not use gas-powered cooking stoves as a heating source for bodily warmth.
- People with mobility problems and hearing, learning, or seeing disabilities can require extra help during a winter storm. The American Red Cross recommends developing a support network of friends, roommates, family members, relatives, personal attendants, co-workers, and neighbors with emergency contact information.
- Get real-time road conditions by dialing 511 or visiting 511sc.org online.
- Even though many come with fur coats, animals can be just as susceptible to freezing temperatures as we are. Make sure your pets and/or livestock have a warm place indoors to avoid the winter elements.

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