



Hazard #11

Winter Storms/Extreme Cold



Heavy snowfall and extreme cold can immobilize an entire region. Winter storms can result in flooding, storm surge, closed highways, blocked roads, downed power lines, and hypothermia.

Know Your Winter Storm Terms:

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.

Winter Storm Watch – 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.

Before Winter Storms and Extreme Cold, keep the following supplies on hand:

Rock Salt to melt ice on walkways.

Sand to improve traction.

Snow shovels and other snow removal equipment.

Prepare the home

Have sufficient supplies, including medication and food.

Learn how to shut off water valves in case a pipe bursts.

Prepare the car

- Verify antifreeze levels are sufficient to avoid freezing.
- Check for serviceability of lights and flashing hazard lights.
 - Maintain adequate windshield washer fluid level.
- Maintain at least a half tank of gas during the winter season.
 - Keep an emergency kit in the car that includes:

o Windshield scraper

o Flashlight

o Water

o Matches

o First Aid Kit

o Blankets



Dress for the Weather

Wear several layers of loose fitting, lightweight, warm clothing rather than one layer of heavy clothing.

Wear mittens, which are warmer than gloves.

Wear a hat.

Cover your mouth with a scarf to protect your lungs.



Guidelines During A Winter Storm

Listen to the radio or television for weather reports and emergency information.

If pipes freeze, remove any insulation and wrap pipes in rags. Completely open all faucets and pour hot water over the pipes, starting where they were most exposed to the cold.

Refer to the Functional Procedure for "Winter Weather," as indicated.



If You are Outdoors

Avoid overexertion when shoveling snow.

Cover your mouth to protect your lungs from extremely cold air.

Keep dry and change wet clothing frequently to prevent a loss of body heat.

Watch for signs of frostbite, which 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, call for medical help immediately.

Watch for signs of hypothermia, which include uncontrollable shivering, memory loss, disorientation, incoherence, slurred speech, drowsiness, and apparent exhaustion.

If Symptoms of Hypothermia are Detected:

Move the person to a warm location.

Remove wet clothing.

Dress the person in dry clothing and wrap the entire body in a blanket.

Warm the center of the body first.

Give warm beverages if alert to swallow.

Call for assistance as soon as possible.

