

## **WINTER WEATHER TIPS**

During major winter storms, it is usually best to remain at home rather than venturing outdoors. You should always be prepared to ride out any adverse weather. Your primary concerns at home include the possible loss of heat, electricity, and telephone service. You may also run out of supplies if the storm persists for several days.

You should keep a three day supply of non perishable food which requires no cooking or refrigeration. Have a non electric can opener available. Store one gallon of water per person, each day.

Your disaster supplies for the home should also include a first aid kit along with essential prescription medication, a portable radio with extra batteries, a NOAA Weather Radio, flashlights with extra batteries, and several blankets.

Remember, if you lose power, you will probably lose your primary source of heat as well since most furnaces need electricity to function. If you do have an alternate source of heat such as a fireplace or wood stove, make sure that it is in good condition. Stove pipes, flues, and chimneys should be inspected and cleaned. Be sure your smoke alarms and fire extinguishers are in good working order.

When outdoors, be sure to dress properly for the cold. Wear several layers of warm, loose fitting clothing. The layers help to trap your body heat better than one heavy layer, and a few layers can be removed to avoid perspiration and subsequent chill. The outer layer should also be water repellent.

Also, remember to wear a hat to shield yourself from the cold since a significant loss of body heat occurs from your head. In addition, mittens are better than gloves at protecting your fingers from the extreme cold.

Winter weather poses many challenges to travelers who take to the roads. Visibility is often reduced by snow, fog, and the accumulation of Road salts on the windshield. Traction can be reduced by snow, ice, and water ponding on roadways. Winter weather also increases the stress on your vehicles electrical and cooling systems.

Be sure your vehicle is ready for the winter driving season. Have your engine tuned up... your battery checked... and your engine coolant or antifreeze tested to see if it can withstand the extreme cold. Also, you can increase your visibility by installing new windshield wipers. Finally, be sure your snow tires or all season tires are properly inflated and have enough tread to grip the Road.

You should consider a survival kit for your car, especially if you drive in rural areas. Have a blanket or sleeping bag on hand along with a supply of non perishable food, a first aid kit with prescription medication if necessary, and bottles of drinking water or juice. If you become stuck or stranded, your chances of survival will be greater. Also include a shovel, sand or Cat litter, booster cables, an ice scraper, and a snow brush.

Always check with the latest National Weather Service forecasts, warnings and statements. NOAA Weather Radio is a good source for the latest information 24 hours a day. If a storm is occurring or about to begin, consider postponing your trip until conditions improve. If you must travel during inclement weather, remain on well traveled main routes or highways. Let someone at your destination know that you are on your way, and tell them your estimated time of arrival.

Travel with someone if possible. If you get stuck, stay in or near your vehicle. It is easy to get lost or disoriented in a blinding snowstorm or blizzard. Also, Rescue personnel can find you much more easily if you stay put.

You can find out more about winter weather safety on our website at [www.Weather.Gov/buf](http://www.Weather.Gov/buf)