

## Winter Storm/Extreme Cold

Winter Storms range from a normal snow over a few hours to a blizzard with blinding, wind-driven snow that lasts for several days. Many winter storms bring dangerously low temperatures and sometimes, strong winds, icing, sleet, and freezing rain. One of the main concerns is that winter weather can knock out heat, power, and communication, sometimes for days at a time. Heavy snowfall and extreme cold can have serious effects on an entire region. Icy roadways can cause serious accidents, and sometimes people die from being in really cold temperatures for too long.

### EXTREME COLD

#### Before

Be Prepared - Build an emergency kit. Make a family communications plan. Help your parents sprinkle sand on sidewalks and walkways. This helps to make them less slippery. Make sure you dress warmly and have extra blankets! Bring pets inside.

#### During

- Stay inside! Sidewalks can be very slippery and you can hurt yourself if you fall.
- If you are outside helping to shovel snow, make sure you wear a hat. It helps keep you from losing body heat.
- Wear mittens. They're warmer than gloves.
- Cover your mouth with a scarf to protect your lungs from the cold air.
- Put on dry clothes as soon as you come inside.
- If you can't feel your fingers, toes, ears or nose, or they appear pale white, tell a grown-up immediately. You need to see a doctor.
- If you can't stop shivering, have trouble remembering things, feel tired or talk funny call for help. You may have hypothermia which can be very dangerous.

#### After

Continue to wear layers, a hat, scarf and mittens, or gloves. These will help to keep you warm and protect you from frostbite.

### SNOW

When a significant amount of snow falls, the City of Minneapolis declares a Snow Emergency to remove accumulating snow from the full width of City streets.

Snow Emergencies are a set of predefined parking regulations that allow crews to completely clear streets of accumulating snow. In order to be plowed completely, streets must be free of parked vehicles.

A Snow Emergency will be declared no later than 6 p.m. on any given day to allow sufficient time to notify residents to move their vehicles to allow for the most efficient clearing of snow from the streets. Snow Emergency routes are marked in two ways:

1. RED Snow Emergency Route Signs
2. BLUE Street Name Signs



4th St SE



### FACT CHECK

1. Uncontrollable shivering, memory loss, mumbling, slurred speech and feeling tired can all be signs of what cold weather related condition?
2. True or False? Wet clothing chills the body quickly.
3. Why should you not eat snow?
4. Signs of frostbite are:
  - a. Loss of feeling in fingers, toes, ear lobes, tip of the nose
  - b. Numbness
  - c. White, gray, or pale appearance of skin
  - d. All of the above

*(Answers on next page)*

## ANSWERS

1. **Hypothermia.** If you see signs of hypothermia in someone, get them to a warm location, remove wet clothing, warm the center of the body first by giving warm beverages, and get medical help as soon as possible.
2. **True.** Wet clothing loses its ability to insulate heat. Keep dry. Change wet clothing frequently. It lowers your body temperature. Melt it first before eating. Even better, drink some hot chocolate instead!
3. **D, all are signs of frostbite.** Frostbite is an injury to the body caused by freezing and can permanently damage the body. Get out of the cold or cover up skin at the first signs of redness or pain in any skin area.

## WORDS TO KNOW

**Frostbite** - A medical condition when skin or body tissue is damaged from freezing. It's most common in parts of the body farthest from your heart that are exposed, such as fingers, toes, ears and nose.

**Hypothermia** - A sickness when your body temperature drops below what is needed to be healthy and work properly. It is the opposite of heat stroke.

**Freezing Rain** - Rain that freezes when it hits the ground, creating a layer of ice on roads, walkways, trees and power lines Sleet Rain that turns to ice before reaching the ground.

## WINTER STORM DO'S AND DON'TS

### Do

- Be alert, listen for official information and instructions.
- Begin your preparations as soon as possible.
- Activate home preparedness plan and kit.
- Conserve fuel, if necessary, by keeping your residence cooler than normal. Temporarily close off heat to some rooms.
- Wear appropriate clothing to go outside:
  - o Wear several layers of loose-fitting, lightweight, warm clothing rather than one layer of heavy clothing. The outer garments should be tightly woven and water repellent.
  - o Wear mittens, which are warmer than gloves.
  - o Wear a hat. A hat will prevent loss of body heat.
  - o Cover your mouth with a scarf to protect your lungs.
- Avoid overexertion when shoveling snow. Overexertion can bring on a heart attack—a major cause of death in the winter.
- Walk carefully on snowy, icy, walkways.
- Stay indoors during the storm.
- Keep dry. Change wet clothing frequently to prevent a loss of body heat.
- Watch for signs of Frostbite and Hypothermia. Seek medical help immediately.
- Abide by all special rules and restrictions put in place by authorities. If you are told to stay off the roads unless there's an emergency, do what they say.
- Leave your phone plugged into the wall, especially if there's a possibility of power outages. If the power goes out, you're guaranteed to have maximum battery life.
- Drive only if it is 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.
- Load up your car with winter clothes and blankets. Make sure your gas tank is full before you venture out.

### Do Not

- Bring grills or generators inside. Running them indoors could be a deadly mistake, as both emit carbon monoxide that could poison you in a confined space
- Sit in your running car unless you've cleared the tailpipe of snow. If carbon monoxide can't escape into the open air, it could escape into your car and kill you. Partially open a window on down wind side
- Venture out into the snow without letting someone know where you're going
- Leave your car if you're caught in a pileup. It's far safer to stay in your car until you're sure the scene is safe and there won't be additional collisions
- Stand under trees if they're coated in ice.